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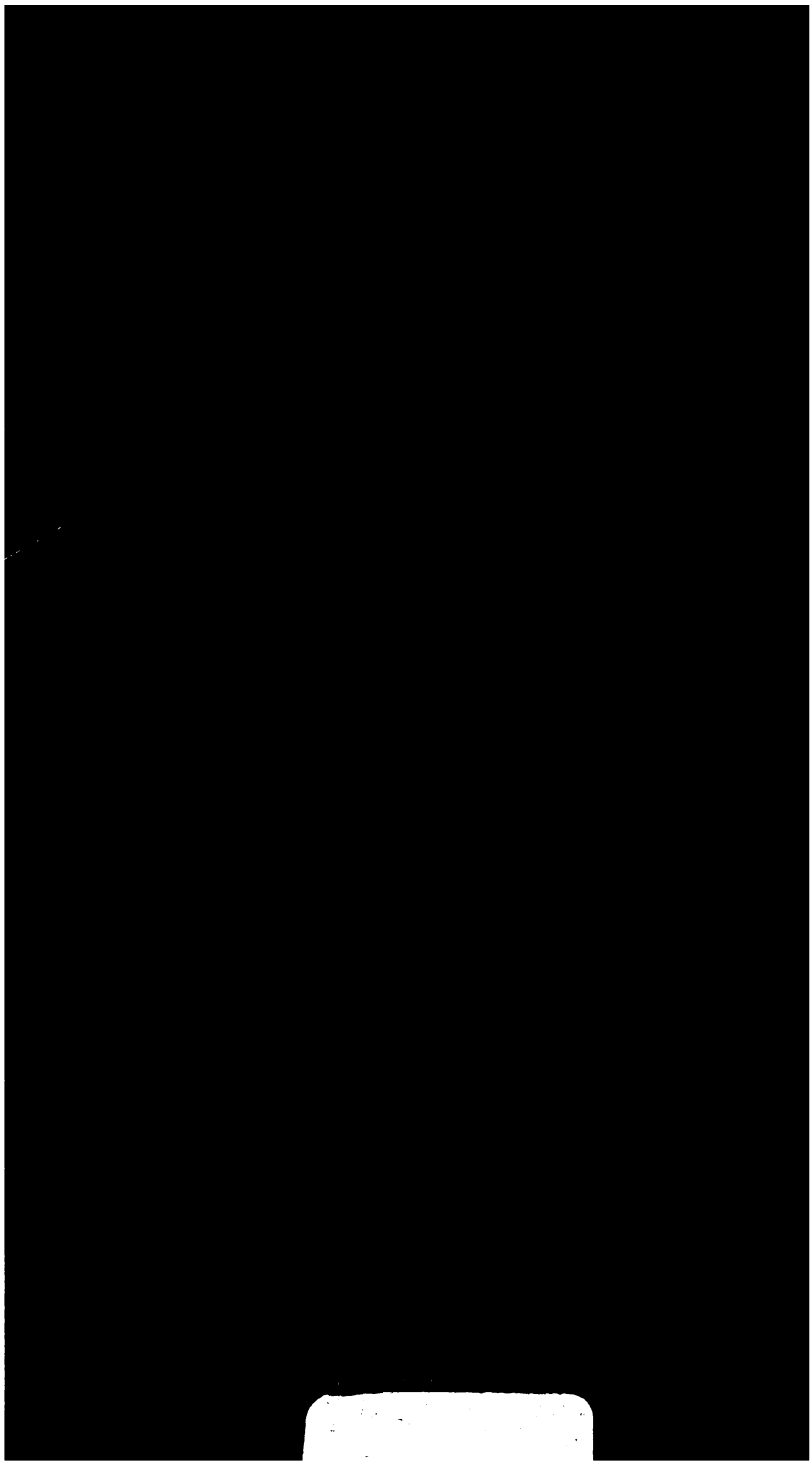

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OF

ANCIENT AND MODERN

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FLIRTATION.

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FLIRTATION.

A NOVEL,

BY LADY CHARLOTTE BURY,

AUTHORESS OF "MARRIAGE IN HIGH LIFE," &c.

Are not they in the actual practice of Guilt, who care not whether they are thought Guilty or not?—*Spectator.*

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FLIRTATION.

CHAPTER I.

It seems to be true, that no plenitude of present gratifications can make the possessor happy for a continuance, unless he have something in reserve—something to hope for and look forward to. This I conclude to be the case, from comparing the alacrity and spirits of men who are engaged in any pursuit which interests them, with the dejection and ennui of almost all who are either born to so much that they want nothing more, or who have used up their satisfactions too soon, and drained the sources of them. PALEY.

"So, the old boy is off at last?" said lounging Lepel to Lord Mowbray, as he entered the room. "I give you joy, Mowbray, with all my heart:" (had he any?) "I thought that the unconscionable fellow had taken an everlasting lease of life, and never would have the grace to part with it! Well, and so now you have nothing to do but to make the contents of his coffers fly; and enjoy yourself with all your friends: an enviable situation, truly! Nothing but amusement, and with your own set; delightful! Well, my dear Lord, always remember there is not one among the number more truly attached to you than myself."

"Friends" and "attached"—these two words were curiously conned over by Lord Mowbray, who, besides feeling the terms in which Captain Lepel so flippantly spoke of his deceased relative, to be repugnant to him, was a nice appreciator of real elegance, and contemned the fashionable slang, which confounds the true meaning of language, and is the refuge of inferiority to hide its emptiness; added to which, Lord Mowbray could not coolly speculate on worldly advantages, whilst the memory of one connected, though distantly, with him by ties of consanguinity, and with whom he had lived in habits of intimacy and reciprocal kindness, was still fresh in his bosom. Restraining, however, all expression of his feelings, after a considerable pause, he rejoined—"No—very true, I have nothing to do—nothing, absolutely, except to amuse myself; neither have I ever had: but, then, how shall I do that?" and he

sighed as he took up a newspaper which lay on the table, and ran his eye carelessly over the page.

"Ah! what," rejoined Captain Lepel, "always singular? Nobody like you at saying an odd thing. Very excellent, 'faith! I will sport it at Brookes's. A man with twenty thousand a year, young too, and of rank, not know how to amuse himself! Capital, upon my honour! 'How shall I do that?' Ha! ha! ha! Well, perhaps it might afford you some diversion, or at least put you in the way to find some, to go to the rehearsal at the Opera this morning. I have always the *entrée* at the rehearsals; there will be Cosí Fan Tutte, a delicious opera, in which the new Prima Donna, Rosalinda Lorenzi, makes her *début*."

"Rosalinda!" echoed Lord Mowbray; "what Rosalinda?"

"Why *the* Rosalinda, to be sure; have you not heard of her? have *you* been in Italy so long and not heard *the* Rosalinda?"

"Impossible!" exclaimed Lord Mowbray.

"Why impossible, my dear Lord? Depend upon it, it is so; come, and you'll see. But, by the way, have you looked at the famous Arabian ponies which have been brought over for his Majesty? They are not publicly shown, but I can take you to the stables; I am sure, that any friend of mine may see them at any time. I take care never to be without a friend at court. Ha! ha! ha! Will you go, my Lord?"

"To the rehearsal, or to the stables, which do you mean? Either will do for me—yes—no—stay. Yes; I think I may as well walk towards the stables as any other way."

This matter arranged, Lepel passed his arm familiarly through Lord Mowbray's; and having conducted the latter to a noted fruit-shop by the way, ate peaches when they were at the price of gold; and then, feeling in his pocket, carelessly observed that he had forgotten his purse—"but never mind," turning to the shop-woman, put it down to *my* account; you know *me*, Mrs. Florimel, I am always an exact man; put it to *my account*." That meant to any other person's except his own, whom he might chance to persuade to become her customer; the way that the bills of many an honourable gentleman and lady are paid; and as it answered Mrs. Florimel's purpose precisely as well, no observations were ever made, and the tacit understanding was duly preserved and acted upon. "Oh! dear Sir," she replied smilingly,—"don't mention payment; certainly, Sir, I am always happy to serve you any time; much obliged for all favours; won't my Lord take another peach? always happy

to have the honour of serving any of your friends, Sir. As often as you pass this way, pray look in; shall have some choice grapes next week."

Having managed this little difficulty after a fashion usual with Captain Lepel (and in which, as in similar manœvring, practice had made him perfect), he was proceeding to conduct Lord Mowbray to the King's stables, when, as if suddenly recollecting himself, he pulled out his watch, and observed—"If we go there now, we may be perhaps too late for the rehearsal." And perhaps, too, he apprehended his interest in that quarter would prove less powerful than he had vaunted it to be, and therefore dexterously avoided a discovery, by turning his companion's footsteps towards the Opera House.

"Now, you will be enchanted, my dear Lord! Never was any thing altogether like the Rosalinda, nor ever will be again; she has two notes in her voice beyond any voice that was ever heard before."

Lord Mowbray instinctively put his hands on his ears—"I hate screaming."

"Ha, ha, ha; you are just the same, I see; just the same queer, eccentric fellow!—but I was giving you an account of Rosalinda." Lord Mowbray sighed, and stared at Captain Lepel. "She is wondrous handsome, my Lord, I do assure you; even your fastidious taste would acknowledge this. Her hair quite black, her skin of the most delicate texture, as white as snow,—that is to say, a sort of rich cream-coloured skin, that looks like marble; such a carriage! and then sings like forty thousand angels."

"That is too many at once to please me: too many to be agreeable, I should conceive, to any one," interrupted Lord Mowbray.

"Pshaw, my Lord, it is impossible to tell you any thing. You always make a joke."

"Why there are some persons, indeed, whose conversation one must always either seriously contradict, or laugh at; and upon the whole I prefer doing the latter, Lepel, and conclude my friends must do so likewise."

"Very true, very true; ha, ha, ha! I had always rather laugh for one; I never saw any use in contradiction, not I: quite of your Lordship's opinion, upon my honour!"

"Strange," said Lord Mowbray vacantly; "very, very unaccountable!" And then suddenly stopping, he added: "I must bid you good morning, for I recollect I have an engagement in Brook-

street. They are all waiting for me to give some orders about the funeral."

"Who is waiting for you? what, all? nonsense! Why do you go into that melancholy hole? Stay till they have cleared it of its black velvet and its escutcheons, and purified it from the undertakers. I hate going to such scenes; why it only serves to give a man the blue devils."

"It is not the gayest thing in the world, to be sure; but I promised old Davies, and will not disappoint him."

"Old Davies! why you do not mind your promise to him? As if they could not screw up my Lord just as well without your orders."

This was too coarse. Lord Mowbray was disgusted, and showed that he was so. Lepel quickly rejoined—"Oh! you need not look grave. You know I always liked the old gentleman. He was the best bred man I ever was in company with,—understood horses better than any body,—kept an excellent table, the best quality (talking of qualities) that any body *can* have, and includes every other that ensures a man many friends. I was only in joke—wouldn't for the world say any thing to offend your good heart, which I value too highly to wound for a moment. Meant nothing at all, I assure you;—nobody I esteemed more than the late Lord Mowbray—except the present:—the present company, you know, are always excepted."

"You are very obliging," replied the latter drily; "I wish you a good morning:" and bowing, he walked away, leaving Captain Lepel to study his part more thoroughly for another opportunity.

When Lord Mowbray knocked at the door in Brook-street, his languid step and serious brow afforded a melancholy satisfaction to the faithful old servant who ushered the young heir into the house of mourning. After some preliminary discourse, he ventured to hope that his Lordship meant to attend his noble relative's remains, in person, to their place of interment.

Lord Mowbray's heart was good; it is difficult for a very youthful heart to be otherwise. He laid his hand on the old man's shoulder, that shoulder which in his infancy had so often borne him to his sports, and with an affectionate feeling of respect and sympathy he said, "Certainly, Davies, certainly; I always intended to do so."

"Thank God!" said Davies, and he wept for joy now, as he had lately done for sorrow—joy to see what he considered so fair a promise of good qualities in the successor of his late master.

Lord Mowbray felt all this—and thought "Would that I were indeed every thing this good man gives me the credit of being! But if I am otherwise, is it my fault? can I help it? who can help being what they are, whatever that may be?" The still small voice which replied to his questions, he heard not, because he refused to hear; and passing on through a suite of apartments, one more sumptuous than another, he looked around with a vacant gaze, and throwing himself into a large tapestried chair, said, "So all this is mine!" then relapsing into an indefinite reverie, he remained the sport of many visions which floated upon his fancy, but left no distinct impression on his mind.

From this state he was aroused by the entrance of Colonel Pennington, the oldest friend of his own very early years. After briefly stating to him the orders he had given to the household, in accordance with the last desire of his kinsman, it was finally arranged that they should set out together on the following day for Dorsetshire, and be in readiness at Mowbray Castle, to attend the remains of their departed friend to the burial-place of his ancestors.

There is no situation in which a person can be placed, which is perhaps more favourable to tranquil thought than the corner of a carriage travelling over roads where no very striking objects attract the attention; but where at the same time a smiling, well-cultivated country puts the mind in good humour with itself: unless, indeed, that mind be very hard to please, or is affected by some violent passion; neither of which was exactly the case with Lord Mowbray, who had leisure, therefore, while Colonel Pennington, lulled in complete forgetfulness, was asleep by his side, to indulge in calm reflection, and to take a survey of his present situation, together with the pains and penalties attached to its greatness: for of the former there was, and ever will be, some alloy mingled with the sweets of the latter.

While his mind retraced the events which had befallen him, he felt the responsibility which now attached to his station, and he thought more deeply and seriously than he had ever done before; yet he asked himself, "Would I resign my station to forego the pleasure with the pain?—I would not. No monarch that ever abdicated the throne but repented him of the deed: even the tradesman who quits his calling to enjoy at ease the fruits of his long and laborious toil, pines for the stimulus of its progressive increase, and mises his daily task; and the individual who abandons the station assigned him *by birth* or circumstances, would feel the same

degrading conviction, the same vacancy. Why do I, therefore, torment myself with speculations on what is, and must be, my destiny?—Those dried leaves that I see rolling about, now taken up in eddies by the wind, and floating in mazy circles in mid air—now scattered far and wide to mingle with the dust, are doubtless made to fulfil *their* destiny; and I shall, I conclude, fill mine, just like them, just like every body and every thing else, without knowing why or wherefore." Lord Mowbray forgot he was endowed with other faculties than the leaf of the desert, or the breath of the blast.

As the carriage passed through the little hamlet of Abbotsbury, composed chiefly of fishermen's huts, many of its hardy inhabitants, with their wives and families, prompted by curiosity, thronged the highway to catch a glimpse of the new Lord of the Castle, and to indulge in conjecture whether they should be the better for his presence. No advantages certainly had accrued to them, or the surrounding district, from his immediate predecessor, who, whether from dislike to the residence, or from indolence, had never lived among them; and had scarcely even visited this property, though derived from an ancient line of noble ancestry, and justly therefore entitled to his care. The consequences of such an absence, and the apparent neglect attached to it, had long been felt, and at length became visible in an almost hereditary dislike to the very name of Mowbray; so that the present successor to its wealth and honours found himself at the same time doomed, however innocently, to inherit a proportion of the odium thus unfortunately incurred. As the gathering crowd gazed at the equipage on its way to the humble inn, this feeling evinced itself in a thousand little incidents—and Lord Mowbray, descending from the carriage, walked forward whilst the horses were refreshed.

At a cottage on the skirts of the hamlet, he perceived an elderly woman standing on the threshold, who called loudly to a man that followed close behind Lord Mowbray. "I say, Jem, hast seen 'im? —I wonder what thou'st been at the pains to come so far for. This new one will be just as bad as the old, I doubt not. You know, the leases are to be set, and he's only cum'd to see what he can get. I would not stir a step to look on him, not I; for all the good we have ever got from t'other is his dead bones, that are brought home to be buried in the family vault to-morrow."

"One may hear something worth hearing," said Lord Mowbray to himself, "even where one least expects it."

At that moment, the outriders and the carriage came up—it

stopped—the step was let down. Its splendour and that of the servants dazzled the eyes of the old cottager. She dropped many obsequious curtseys; and, as Lord Mowbray returned her civility with a low bow, she stood rooted to the spot with amazement, and something too of terror, at the idea that the new Lord, as she called him, of the Castle had overheard her conversation.

At a very short distance, Mowbray Castle became visible, standing finely upon a bold and projecting rock which jutted into the sea; its situation being rendered still more magnificent and commanding from the flatness of the surrounding ground. It had been a place of strength in the days of the Eighth Harry, whose prudence caused the coast towards France to be guarded with many a fortress of similar description; and it had continued so till the jealousy of the Puritans, during the Civil Wars, had led to the dismantling of every strong-hold wrested from the Cavaliers, lest the fortune of war might again place them in the hands of their former owners. Nothing now remained, therefore, of the original warlike greatness of Mowbray Castle, save a few vestiges, which were only to be traced by the antiquary; but, as a castellated building, it had an imposing air, and, standing forth in fearless defiance of the raging element of waters, to which it was exposed, it claimed a tribute of admiration from its very loneliness: time too, with its magic hand, had spread over the ruins that vague and indefinite interest which it ever sheds, even over the beauty it destroys; and recollection, therefore, was busy in association. The park attached to the Castle, though it had small title to the name, was a vast, barren piece of land, with here and there a stunted tree, bent from the blasts of the sea, that made desolation appear more desolate. A few patches of yellow blossomed furze were interspersed among the white rocks that lay scattered over its surface, with a sprinkling of the sea-daisy raising its hardy flower in that short thymy herbage, where the sheep found sweet but scanty pasture. A pretty steep descent led through this barren scene to a piece of marshy flat ground, which at certain times of the tide was completely covered by the sea, and must have cut off all communication with the fortress except by water. The ruins of a drawbridge, which lay scattered around, told that this circumstance had once been a valuable defence to its inhabitants; but now a little boat, fastened to the stump of some decayed tree, afforded a ready access to every passenger, when, during the high tides, it might not be safe to cross the inlet. "I do not wonder," said Lord Mowbray, as the carriage jolted alternately over the huge

stones imbedded in the sand, and then sank half-way up the wheels in water—"I do not wonder that my kinsman did not choose to reside here; nothing short of a wild-duck would voluntarily inhabit these regions."

"I don't know that, my Lord. I am not of your opinion: first, because there is a pleasure in property exceeding most pleasures; secondly, because, even in indolent characters, there is a pride in doing good, when that good can be done easily; and where beneficial power may be most extensively exerted, and its effects most sensibly and immediately acknowledged, this is a pleasure equalled by few others, and is one that is tacitly felt by all. Believe me, it would have been better if the late Lord Mowbray had resided more here."

"Better?" said his companion, in replying to him by a species of interrogation; and then added, after a pause—"Perhaps, it *would* have been better."

No sooner did the carriage begin to ascend the hill on which the Castle stood, than a number of persons, whom they had not perceived before, came forward, seemingly to meet and offer their rude congratulations to the new Lord. "Who are these?" asked Lord Mowbray.

"Oh!" doubtless, some of the tenantry on your estates, who are assembled to do honour to your arrival, and to show respect to your cousin's remains."

"Ah!" thought Lord Mowbray, "these people, then, are of a different opinion from those of Abbotsbury."

Whatever were their real feelings, the crowd which now advanced evinced much more outward attachment to the family than Lord Mowbray could have anticipated from the first welcome in the neighbouring hamlet; and he was falling into a train of reflection on the subject, when a man, apparently of command by his manner, pushed through the group, and came forward to the carriage-door. "Welcome, your Lordship! welcome to the Castle!" he said, in a tone of assumed congratulation; but in which was evidently mingled an expression of doubt, lest his arrival might prove unwelcome to the speaker. "I fear, my Lord, your Lordship will find the accommodation in this ruined dwelling but little what it ought to be; but I have done my best in the short interval since I heard your Lordship's intentions were to come."

"The steward, I presume?" said Lord Mowbray, as he turned to Colonel Pennington for information. He was going to reply, when

he perceived that the motley group, in advance of the carriage, had already detached the horses, and were about to drag him in triumph up the ascent. "No, no!" cried Lord Mowbray, putting his head out of the carriage—"no, no; I will walk up, thank you." And opening the coach-door, sprang out, followed by his companion.

The steward now made way through the throng, which however closed as soon as Lord Mowbray and the Colonel had passed, and pressed eagerly after them, uttering loud and repeated shouts of welcome. One among the rest, a tall, lean, large-boned figure, proved the most noisy and troublesome of these attendants, and both in voice and appearance excited Lord Mowbray's disgust. His eyes, twisted in every possible direction, looked across a nose of extraordinary length, which, dyed of the deepest red, showed the pale and sallow complexion of his face, by contrast made more hideous; while a perpetual grin seemed to distort his countenance, as he endeavoured to make himself heard in the general confusion of tongues. "I wish the fellow would not torment me so," said Lord Mowbray; "Who is he?"

This question, asked at random, was quickly answered by a little square-set man, with a black hanging brow and a deep scar on one cheek, who pushed his head over Lord Mowbray's shoulder! "Oh that, your Lordship, is the Gentle Shepherd, well known in these parts, and in many distant ones. Every body knows Smiling Bill. He's the man, and please you, my Lord, who has the care of all your honour's cattle; there's not a sheep-path over the country that he does not know as well as the sheep themselves."

"And, pray," asked Lord Mowbray, perceiving that Smiling Bill had given place to his informant, and willing to protect himself from the former by continuing his inquiries,—"and pray, what is *your* post in these parts—who are you?"

"Oh! they calls me, my Lord, the Wandering Sailor; but my real name is Ben Hardy. I have been here and hereabouts, man and boy, these forty years. I am a lone man, your Lordship; have no soul of kith or kin to speak a word for me, or to give me a kind look. I have eaten my bread in the sweat of my brow; I have made my bed where I might; I have done a job here and a job there, first for one, then for t'other: nobody ever thanked poor Ben. Now if your Honour would only take my hard case into your thoughts, I might be made watchman or errand-man, and get an honest livelihood."

"Have you not always done so, then?" questioned Lord Mowbray, looking hard at him, as if he doubted the fact.

"*Always*, your Honour? Have I not *always* done so? Why, there's a puzzling question, now. As if I could go back forty years, and remember what I have always done! Your Honour has not lived so long, I doubt, by some few; and could *you* remember all the days and every day of your life? no, to be sure! A gentleman's memory is not to be ransacked in such a manner as that; and if not a gentleman's, who knows so much better, why, then, surely not a poor man's, of whom less is expected!"

"You are an ingenious fellow, at least," said Lord Mowbray;—"I will not forget you."

"Thank you, my Lord; thank your Lordship!" vociferated Ben, as he made his way back into the crowd, shouting another loud welcome in acknowledgment of the success of his suit.

There is no saying where the number of applicants would have stopped, after the gracious reception given to Ben Hardy, had not the steward, turning round as he reached the top of the ascent, perceived the throng striving with each other, and struggling who should be the first to approach Lord Mowbray. Calling to them with a tremendous voice, and brandishing the staff that he held *ex officio*, in his right hand, he bade them stand off; then moving at the same moment a few steps forward, appeared ready to enforce his orders in a still more peremptory manner.

To those who happen to have witnessed the lashing-off a pack of hounds, when running dead in upon the object of their pursuit, the sudden check produced on the yelping and wrangling crew at Lord Mowbray's heels may perhaps be intelligible. In an instant all was silent, except the grinding of the teeth, and a low muttering which proceeded from some few of the boldest and most forward of the group, and whose looks showed that they rather respected the presence of their future lord, than the command of the man in authority.

Colonel Pennington took Lord Mowbray's arm, and as they quickened their pace to reach the summit, whispered in his ear, "A sad raggamuffin band! but I am glad to see, at any rate, that they are under some control."

They now stood upon the greensward that surrounded the Castle on every side save one: on that, the building rose abruptly from the very edge of the rock, and seemed to form a part of it. The head *grew dizzy, as* the eye, looking on the diminished waves beneath,

measured the height of the precipice; and the vessels, spread over the vast expanse of ocean, appeared, as their white sails turned to the sun, like pearls set in an outspread mantle of azure.

Lord Mowbray cast a glance over the precipice, and, stepping hastily back, turned towards the entrance. A low arch led by a few steps into a sort of porch, at the end of which appeared a massive weatherbeaten door opening into a spacious hall, where damp and mildew hung in large patches upon the bare and neglected wall. Here and there remained the rusty fastenings which formerly had held the armour and warlike weapons of the inmates of the Castle; and above, suspended from the beams of the ceiling, tattered and clad with cobwebs, waved the remnants of banners once proudly borne by Lord Mowbray's ancestry in the field of battle, or planted in defiance on the ramparts of their fortress.

It was impossible that Lord Mowbray should not feel sad at these signs of departed greatness; and if his spirit had been of a turn to pass lightly over the reflections which they suggested, the very gloom of the place would have inspired him with melancholy. A wide and ample staircase, of the stone found in the neighbouring Isle of Portland, ascended from the middle of the hall, and, branching off right and left, terminated in a length of gallery communicating with the different apartments above. The broad and massive railing, on each side the steps, was ornamented with fretwork of *quatre feuil;* and at intervals were placed escutcheons, sculptured with the bearings of different families allied to the Mowbrays. As his eye rested on these frail emblems of pride, and saw the distinctions, thus vainly endeavoured to be preserved, mutilated and crumbling into dust, Lord Mowbray sighed, and the occasion of his visit was recalled forcibly to his mind. "Let a few years pass," he said inwardly, "and some one will be here to fulfil the same duty to my remains: what then avail all this parade, and these distinctions of earthly grandeur?"

Many of the rooms, as they advanced, appeared going fast to total decay; the wind whistled from between the shutters, which, shrunk and rotten, no longer fitted the apertures; and some, suspended by one hinge only, left uncontrolled entrance to the storms of heaven. The torn arras, the remnants of rich brocade, hanging in shreds upon the walls; the empty picture-frames, robbed of the animated forms that once had spoken in mute intelligence to the spectator; the broken articles of *massive* furniture piled up in the fireplace,

or standing tottering and leaning against the walls; the squalid state of the floors and ceilings; the birds' nests, built in the angles and recesses of the cornices and mouldings: all showed the approaching ruin of this once proud structure, and the evident neglect which had allowed destruction to make such inroads upon it.

The steward hastened Lord Mowbray forward as quickly as he dared, and urged his reaching the eastern apartments, which had been prepared for his reception, and were by far the best preserved in the building. "Better, I hope, at any rate, than those we have passed," said Colonel Pennington, "or, by my faith! we are likely to be badly off in this Castle of yours, my Lord."

As they entered the room, it offered an appearance of comparative comfort, after what they had witnessed. Some decorations painted on the walls were still perfect, and maintained their colouring: the furniture, of antique form, seemed to bid defiance to the hand of time; and the black oak table, planted in the middle of the apartment and screwed to the floor, looked as if it could fall only with the Castle walls. The upper part of the window was decorated with some very richly painted glass, which here and there cast an increased lustre on the colours of the walls; while its own brilliancy was contrasted with the coarse, blue-knotted panes that had, from time to time, supplied deficiencies in the original casements.

The steward, having ushered Lord Mowbray in to this and the adjoining apartments, withdrew to attend the wants of his domestics; and his Lordship and Colonel Pennington had an opportunity of commenting on the strange reception, and altogether curious class of dependents, who appeared in possession of his late kinsman's property. "We shall know more about the matter," said Lord Mowbray, "when I have seen the agent of the estate in the neighbourhood. Meanwhile, the person who commands here seems active and obliging, and he cannot help the ruined state of things, I suppose."

"I feel certain," replied Colonel Pennington, "that these apartments are usually the residence of the gentleman who has just left us, or they would not be as comfortable as they are; and see here," as he fixed his eye on a telescope that was hanging against the wall, "it appears he fills up his idle hours with counting the vessels at sea. Very pretty pastime: I give him credit for his taste; I should do the same myself if I lived here:" and so saying, he took down the glass, and proceeded to examine it. "A very fine glass, upon *my honour*, my Lord," added Colonel Pennington, as he looked

through it; "I can almost tell the colours of that little brig that you can scarcely see with the naked eye. What a constant source of amusement, picking up all the vessels that go by! This window commands the whole of Portland Reach, my Lord; and, seated at a little distance, you may fancy yourself on board a man of war. What an inexhaustible source of interest!"

"Heaven forbid!" said Lord Mowbray, "that I should be doomed to such an entertainment. It puts me in mind of all the horrors of being at sea; and hearing some one tell me, 'that is the coast of Spain—that is the island of Minorca—there is such and such a promontory;' when at best they only look like little black streaks in the horizon. It is just the same to see ships through a glass, passing and repassing on their trackless way. It conveys no feeling to me but that of profound melancholy."

"You have never been long enough at sea, my Lord, to try it fairly."

"I never shall, I hope, my dear Colonel. Come, lay aside your glass and walk out with me; I want to look more about, and to see the Chapel and the burial-place. I imagine all that ragged crew that beset us on our arrival will be elsewhere now—perhaps with the servants in the kitchen, if they have such a place."

"Oh! I'll answer for that," said Colonel Pennington, "and a cellar to boot; or my friend has a nose which does him wondrous wrong!"

They now repassed the desolate gallery, and reached the entrance, where, to the dismay of Lord Mowbray, he encountered Smiling Bill. "What, ho! my friend, go fetch the steward, and tell him I wish to see the Chapel."

This he did as much to get rid of him, as to find the way thither; and while he paced the platform in front of the Castle, and looked round him on every side, he exclaimed to Colonel Pennington, "Where can the Chapel be situated? We seem to be perched high enough to see every thing for twenty miles round, and not a vestige of Chapel or Holyrood can I discover."

At that moment Smiling Bill came from the porch, with a bunch of large keys in his hand. "Please you, my Lord, the steward sent me with these keys to conduct your Lordship to the Chapel. He will be with your Lordship in a twinkling; but he's seeing your Lordship's cattle are well foddered up; for the stabling isn't over good, my Lord. This way, if your Lordship pleases." And before Lord Mowbray could demand the keys, or enforce his absence, Smiling

Bill had strode half-way to the edge of the cliff, and was, or pretended to be, beyond hearing.

Lord Mowbray followed; but in another moment his guide had almost disappeared, and nothing but his head was to be seen above the precipice.

Another step forward, and Lord Mowbray found that a steep stair cut in the rock afforded a dangerous path along its sides; and on following this, about half-way down, they came to a ledge of even ground, on which the Chapel was built. It was in good preservation, and, though small, of beautiful and most curious workmanship of the richest and most elaborate Gothic order. There it stood, like a lovely gem cast on a desert shore. It was a thing of beauty, dropped as it were from Heaven, to lead the soul back from earth and earthly vanities to its divine source.

Not a word was said. Smiling Bill opened the doors, and with reverential awe Lord Mowbray entered. The vault was open which was to receive his kinsman's remains; he paused, and, sitting down on a stone bench near it, listened to the sound of the dashing waves beneath, which were in unison with the scene and with his own feelings. "One might well choose to be laid at rest here," said Lord Mowbray to Colonel Pennington, at length breaking silence; "I never saw so tranquil, and, at the same time, so appropriate a spot for the quiet of a last sleep."

"What signifies the spot?" answered Colonel Pennington, in his highest tone, to master the womanish feelings which he felt rising to his eyes—"what signifies the spot? all places are alike good to the good. It is where one is when alive, and above all what one does, that is of consequence. Many of your ancestors lie here, and some of them deserve to be remembered by you, looked up to by you; but whether their bones whiten on the beach below, or crumble in these vaults, it is all one."

"It is so," replied Lord Mowbray, with a sigh; "and yet there are feelings—"

"Which had better be all put in requisition for active service," interrupted Colonel Pennington, "than be allowed to evaporate in useless sentiment. Come, my good Lord, there are many things to be thought of, believe me, which it imports you to consider. Let us begone:" and Lord Mowbray suffered himself to be conducted back to the Castle.

The mournful procession arrived that night, and the next day the clergyman of the parish performed the funeral service, at which

Lord Mowbray, Colonel Pennington, the agent of the estate, the steward, and a few domestics, alone attended. All the persons he had seen the day before had vanished, and Lord Mowbray accounted for it, in his own mind, by the sentiment he had heard the old woman express at Abbotsbury. He had generally professed, and perhaps still continued to do so, that he valued not the opinion of the world, and cared not what was said of him; yet the remembrance of that old woman's words often recurred to him. 'Tis true that

> "Many a shaft at random sent,
> Finds aim the archer never meant;
> And many a word at random spoken
> May wound, or heal, a heart that's broken."

And in after life Lord Mowbray could trace the beneficial train of reflection (he even did so now) which a casual hearing of rebuke to his ancestor's memory had given rise to.

In the arrangement of his affairs, which occupied him incessantly during his stay at Mowbray Castle, a wish to conciliate the good opinion of all dependent upon him seemed the prevailing feeling in the orders which he issued; and many an abuse and encroachment on the part of his tenantry was overlooked, or but slightly noticed, in the accomplishment of this object; while all grievances were instantly redressed, complaints listened to with patience, even when unreasonable in themselves, and promises of reward held out to laudable and proper exertions of industry. The Castle was to be repaired, the roads improved, and the Park and its vicinity brought into better order, so that abundance of employment was marked out to the neighbouring poor. Lord Mowbray felt happy in the idea that he was thus the cause of happiness in others. He might have done what he was then doing, perhaps, without any other impulse than that of self-interest,—for what he did was only what another in his situation would have found it advantageous to do; but Lord Mowbray felt an inward consciousness that the words which had reached him at hazard when walking through the lonely village of Abbotsbury, were the true source of his actions on the present occasion; and the being who had so unconsciously awakened him to a sense of duty, he felt, ought not to go unrewarded.

Under this impression, he one morning left the Castle to walk to Abbotsbury and visit the cottage of the old woman, from whose lips he considered he had received so salutary a lesson. It was a

bright, blowing, healthful May morning: the absence of trees and shrubs prevented that recognition of approaching summer, which in woodland scenes bursts so deliciously on the eye in every swelling bud and every fragrant blossom; yet Nature left not Spring, her loved first-born, unhonoured, even in this treeless, flowerless, barren region. The perfumed spirit of the season met the senses; and the fresh, peculiar odours of the ocean, with its briny plants, came delicately borne upon the gusty breeze. The white, flickering clouds, their edges lightly tinged with a roseate hue, chased each other in quick succession through the tranquil firmament. The skylarks, poised high in air, gave out their triumphant melody of song, which, in verity, seems music that is mid-way to heaven; and the fresh, sweet smell of the new-turned earth sent forth that steaming fragrance, which forms a part of the general incense with which creation gratulates the Creator.

Lord Mowbray was in good humour with himself, enlivened by exercise, and made rich by the dispensing of his riches—that only way in which they ever make their possessor truly happy. He seemed to tread on air, and murmured something about his native soil being the most glorious in the world, which it would have delighted some of his friends to hear. As he stepped cheerfully onwards, he half whistled as he went, yet not for want of thought—no! his mind was full and his fancy busy:—but it was called from indefinite wanderings to a definite object.

Just as he reached the boundaries of the Park, and turned down the road that led to Abbotsbury, a lady on a white steed came galloping towards him. The riding-habits and hats of the present day are assuredly not a becoming or feminine costume; and it would be well if, in this age of innovation, some improvement were made in a department of the *toilette* so much requiring it. Yet, the lady whom Lord Mowbray thus unexpectedly encountered looked graceful and lovely, spite of the disadvantages of her dress, and sat her horse without masculine assurance, though without the least appearance of timidity. Some white and dove-coloured greyhounds followed her course, and one of these she reined in her horse to notice; for it seemed to have picked up a thorn in its rambles, and came limping to her call. In stooping down to caress and examine her favourite, as it stood on its hind paws, and rested on her foot, a sudden gust of wind carried off her hat, and away it rolled. In an instant she lightly leapt from her saddle, and giving her horse's reins into her attendant's hand, pursued the truant hat; but every

time she stooped to catch it, away it went again, as though winged by magic, and away after it flew its mistress, as if she too had wings; the faster it rolled, the faster she ran, laughing gaily as the prize eluded her grasp.

For a minute Lord Mowbray was immoveable—but in another he joined the chase, and found it no easy matter to rival in fleetness the agile step of the beautiful creature that flitted before him. Fortunately, another breeze of wind bore the hat fairly over a hedge, and here the lady was at fault. Laughing and breathless, her cheeks blooming with the most vivid, yet most delicate colour, such as the healthful breath of morning alone imparts, she now in her turn stood motionless; while Lord Mowbray, leaping the barrier, secured the object of pursuit. And as he restored it, said with much animation, that, indeed, it did not merit the honour of belonging to one so fair, and was unworthy of its happy destiny.

Had the lady known how seldom any compliment escaped the lips of the person who addressed her, she would perhaps have appeared more flattered at this homage. But confusion or carelessness, it was impossible to say which, marked her reply; and thanking him courteously, though briefly, she vaulted into her saddle as she spoke; and the offending thorn having been removed from the greyhound's foot by her attendant, lady and dogs and servant were soon lost to the view of Lord Mowbray.

In the days of faery, he would have fancied himself under the influence of some enchantment, and that the bright vision he had seen was a being called from the region of spirits; but, as it was, he quickened his step towards the village to inquire concerning the name and condition, if possible, of this beautiful and fleeting visitant. It might be, that the original purport of his walk to Abbotsbury was a little diverted by the circumstances that had occurred on his way thither; but he stopped, notwithstanding, at the cottage (it is possible it might also have been the first he met with on his road) of the old woman who had so unwittingly taught such a useful lesson to him; and, putting a purse well filled into her hand, asked whether or not she had seen a lady pass by mounted on a white horse that morning?

"Lauk, Sir! I never has no time, not I, to look at the folks as goes by. But I did see Mrs. Carter going to market on White Sall. It couldn't be her, I'm thinking? But what's the purse for, and this power of silver?"

"The purse is for you, my good woman,—keep it: and ask of

your neighbours, if they have better eyes, whether they have seen such a lady as I describe, go by, and who she is—and let me know the next time I come this way." And so saying, he escaped the profession of her thanks, and hastened forward to make inquiries elsewhere; but everywhere those inquiries failed, and everywhere he received the same answer in effect. Nobody had seen the lady on a white horse, nobody knew any thing about her, and, moreover, nobody seemed to care. At length, wearied and provoked, he returned to the Castle.

The end of a walk is not always as pleasant as the commencement. Lord Mowbray was partly fatigued, partly provoked; the landscape became darkened by the overcasting of the weather—a strong north-east wind blew cuttingly—the skylarks dropped into their nest; and all the aroma of the earth passed away with the sunshine.

Lord Mowbray entered his Castle, certainly with very different sensations from those with which he had left it; and, declaring there was no dependence upon English climate for four hours together, drew his chair close to the fire, and, cowering over it, indulged in his usual malady—ennui. He was disturbed from nursing this humour by a loud noise, in which the shrill voice of his valet, Le Brun, was heard pre-eminently acute. "Milor,—Monseigneur!" cried the enraged Le Brun, "I never once did present me before your Lordship, pour vous déranger vid my complaints, quoique souvent j'ai souffert peines et martyres de Messieurs les Anglais; et si ce n'était mon attachement pour Monseigneur, Milor, il y a bien long-temps que je ne servais plus ici. Mais, Monseigneur, si je continuais de supporter les affronts de vos gens, mon honneur serait éternellement compromis, et ma confusion serait extrême."

"What *is* the matter?—what is all this noise about?" asked Lord Mowbray, seeing Le Brun pursued by the cook; and he himself bearing a dirty towel in his hand, which he waved around his head with furious gestures.

"Voyez ce torchon, Milor! Vat is de matter? De matter lie here in dis—in dis dirty torchon. It was attaché, Milor,—oui, vraiment! —it vas attaché à mes culottes; and all de household point dere finger at me, and grin. Ils rient, ma foi! ils riront, mais ce sera d'une autre façon!"

"Silence, I command you, Le Brun! What is the meaning of all this noise?"

"My Lord," replied the cook, "may it please your Lordship,

Mounseer has ruined my roast, and your Lordship can have no dinner to-day; so I threatened to put him on the spit instead of the beef which he spoiled, that's all."

"Vous! me mettrez à la broche! Je vous grillerais à la crapaudine premièrement. But dat is not all:—I vas preparing une tasse de café, when Madame Betti, sa chère amie, m'a appliqué ce cadeau que voilà. I am very sorry, Milor, to quit Monseigneur, but I come to resign—c'en est fait! mon honneur est souilli:—I am all covered vid ridicule, and I depart at de soonest."

Lord Mowbray could hardly help laughing, while he ordered the cook to compromise the matter. "Not till I have pulled his French ears well, and be hanged to him," muttered the cook: "has he not spoiled my top dish, and scalded my legs?"

"Well, but you provoked him first."

"I provoked him, my Lord! I scorn to touch him with a pair of tongs, a frog-eating rascal!"

"Milor, it vas Madame Betti, his chère amie, who did put de affron upon me: and dat was de same, you know, Milor."

"Well, Le Brun," interrupted his Lordship, "they shall beg your pardon, and, for my sake, I hope you will agree with them. I have a little commission for you to execute, which will take you away for a day or two, and by that time you will return, and all this will be blown over."

"Oh, oh! dat alters de all, cela change tout: when Milor command, his servant must obey."

"And as for you, Harris," said his Lordship, "show yourself better-hearted than to affront a friendless foreigner. If I do not care about the loss of my roast beef, you need not."

The cook did not seem willing to admit the truth of Lord Mowbray's conclusion on this point; but as the cause was going against him, he retired: muttering, however, as he went, something about foreigners, and partiality, and repent it, &c. &c. "Le Brun," said Lord Mowbray, calling to his valet as he began bowing, and was preparing to follow his adversary; "stop, I want to speak with you."

"Me voici, Milor."

"Do you know the names of any of the noblemen's seats in this neighbourhood? You are generally apt to make yourself master of the *carte du pays* pretty quickly."

"Oh, yes! Milor, Monseigneur sait qu'il y a Milor Neville, et le Duc de Godolphin, qui sont assez proches voisins. Dere chateaux be only some few miles off."

"Do any of their inhabitants ride out?"

It is astonishing what foolish questions sensible men sometimes ask. "Milor, vats your pleasure? Excusez me, I no *onderstand.* Les Dames de ces lieux vont-elles souvent prendre l'air à cheval? Oh, oh! il me semble, Monseigneur"—smiling, and then suddenly becoming grave again: "il me semble qu'en effet je comprends à présent. Si les dames se promènent à cheval,—walk upon de horseback? Oh! Milor wish to know, Le Brun will make his business to ascertain. Milor saura cela au plus vite: wheder de ladies walk in a carriage or upon top de horseback."

"Exactly! and what is their name, and how long they remain in this part of the country."

"How long dey fix here? combien de temps ils comptent séjourner ici? how long dey count to stay in dese parts? Dat shall be known to Milor vidout fail. I shall be on de return as quick as de vind. He blow brisk here, Monseigneur knows."

Le Brun's wrath was entirely laid, in the prospect of having a commission to execute quite to his taste. Now, he thought, if my Lord begins to take any interest in the society of ladies, he will become quite an improved and altered man. Some days, however, elapsed before the information could be procured; and when it was, it only amounted to this:—that a large party had been at Lord Barnstaple's, among whom were General Montgomery and his two nieces, both of whom were very fond of riding, and frequently took that amusement. One of them rode on a white horse.

"Bravo, Le Brun!" said Lord Mowbray, when his servant had given him this account.

"Mais je regrette d'ajouter," Le Brun continued, with a melancholy air; "que ces dames sont parties, elles demeurent à ce que j'ai pu savoir, près de *Soutamton*—"

"Southampton?"

"Oui, précisément. Milor Barnstaple's valet said *Soutamton.* Monseigneur a-t-il d'autres ordres à me donner? Any command to lay upon me?"

"Nothing more at present."

Le Brun bowed, and felt quite satisfied that he should now become an indispensable requisite to Lord Mowbray, since there was a lady in the case.

Colonel Pennington had been agreeably surprised to observe the deep interest that Lord Mowbray appeared to take in Mowbray Castle, and in the future management of the extensive property

around it; but he began to fear that this feeling was gradually dying away, and that with the novelty of the pursuit, its pleasure was expiring. Under this impression, and with the conviction that to maintain such a feeling was of vital importance to the happiness of a man of Lord Mowbray's turn of character, he studied with the most friendly zeal the best means of keeping it alive. Observation and reflection led him to think that a temporary absence from the scene, before satiety should destroy the relish of its pleasures and pursuits, would be the most likely course to ensure success to his wishes: and he made proposals to Lord Mowbray, in consequence, to accompany him in a visit which he had engaged to make in Hampshire. "As soon, my Lord, as you have put things in train here, I do not see that your actual presence will be wanted for some time: not that I wish you to neglect this place," continued Colonel Pennington,—"quite the contrary; but I believe we are all the better for changing the scene, and you will return with more interest when you think you are to see your improvements in a state of more forwardness."

"But where is it you are going to take me?" replied Lord Mowbray.

"Oh, it is to the house of the oldest and the very kindest friend I have—to General Montgomery's, not very far from Southampton."

"Montgomery! Southampton!" ejaculated Lord Mowbray, with some surprise; "are you acquainted with General Montgomery?"

"Yes, to be sure, and have been these fifty years and more—why do you look so surprised?—but will you go with me?"

"Oh! certainly," said Lord Mowbray, with more than usual alacrity—"with much pleasure."

"Well, then, I will write to Montgomery to say, he may expect you with me—when shall I say? will a fortnight suffice for the arrangements still to be made at this Castle of yours?"

"Oh, undoubtedly," answered Lord Mowbray; "sooner if you like."

"Why, what the deuce makes the man in such a hurry, and what made him look so astonished just now?" said Colonel Pennington to himself as he took up his pen, and was sitting down to write to his friend, with the information that Lord Mowbray would accompany him to Montgomery Hall.

The prospect held out in the approaching visit seemed to inspire both parties with renewed spirits. Lord Mowbray was elated with the idea of change; *his curiosity* in regard to the fair incognita (if

Le Brun's information were correct) might perhaps have added to the satisfaction he experienced, although, till the name of Montgomery recalled the circumstance, he had almost forgotten whatever interest that circumstance had excited. Colonel Pennington, too, was delighted to observe this change in his friend, which he attributed to his feeling that his stay at the Castle was no longer as a duty he was called on to perform, and which he could not evade.

The days preceding their departure passed rapidly away—final orders were to be given, and arrangements definitively made—certain ameliorations in the condition of the tenantry immediately in the vicinity of the Castle were to be carried into effect under Lord Mowbray's eye; for even in the *ennui* which had at times taken possession of him, he had never abandoned the object that first roused him to exertion on coming there. And as the period of his leaving the Castle approached, he proved himself more anxious than ever that his intentions in this respect should be realized. His time, therefore, was fully occupied; and he found in Colonel Pennington an active and able coadjutor in all the plans and proposals he suggested for the comfort of those around him.

As they were talking over, on the evening preceding their departure, what had been done, and what still remained to do, to complete the improvements, Colonel Pennington started from his chair, exclaiming, "Do come to the window, Lord Mowbray, and see that blaze of light—what can it be?" They approached close to the casements, and perceived a lurid glare of fire, which, though its source was hidden from them, proceeded evidently from some large conflagration on the shore immediately beneath; for its red light gleamed far across the waves, and, mingling with the silvery moonshine, afforded a combination of colours that was perfectly magical; while the cliff, circling on either side the building, was shrouded in obscurity, or showed only its ragged outline illuminated at intervals as the flames shot upwards. "Let us inquire what all this means," said Lord Mowbray.

"Let us *go and see* rather," said Colonel Pennington; "for your people will be too indolent to inquire, or perhaps some of them here may not be over-willing that you should know the truth." And so saying, they left the apartment. Lord Mowbray called to the servant usually in attendance near the door, but no answer was returned.

"The fellow is gone to see the fire, my Lord, depend upon it," said Colonel Pennington; "but how he should have caught sight

of it through that thick door, or have known it was in existence, I do not understand."

They crossed the hall, and, opening the portal, found themselves on the grassy sward white with dew, and glittering in the fresh and pure moonlight. The atmosphere towards the coast, however, appeared glowing with fire, and the Castle presented a solemn mass of shade where opposed to it.

Lord Mowbray walked to the edge of the cliff, towards the path leading to the Chapel. Still nothing appeared to satisfy them as to the cause of the illumination, which they saw rising more strongly than ever from beneath the butting rock on which they stood. The moon afforded them light enough to guide them in their descent, and Lord Mowbray, followed by his companion, proceeded down the winding declivity. "What can it be?" said Lord Mowbray.

"Why, I rather suspect," replied Colonel Pennington, "that it is a signal to smugglers on the coast; and if our appearance does not disturb the party, we may have an opportunity of seeing how they manage these affairs:—keep close, my Lord, to the side of the cliff, for otherwise our figures will catch the reflection from the fire."

They had already reached the platform, which stood before the entrance to the Chapel, when Lord Mowbray stopped—"I think I hear voices," he said, in a whisper.

"Hush! hush!" answered Colonel Pennington, and they stood quite still: "I also hear voices," resumed the Colonel; "and music too, or else my ears deceive me: why, the rascals have run their cargo, I suppose, and are now making merry over it: let us go and try to get a peep at them."

They stole gently down the continuation of the path; though, as the ostensible reason for its formation seemed at an end when they had reached the Chapel, it was narrower and more difficult; and then, too, Lord Mowbray's acquaintance with its turnings and windings had ceased. By the help of the flame below, however, which began to illuminate the rock now very generally, they made their way well enough till, at a sudden turn, not many fathoms above the shore, they came abruptly in sight of a deep cavern on the beach; its dark recesses gleamed with torches, and at its entrance was burning the fire that had first attracted their attention from the Castle windows. Lord Mowbray started back a few paces, and, laying his finger on his lips, led Colonel Pennington to the spot.

By advancing a little, they had now a full view of what was passing within; and the Colonel, making signs to Lord Mowbray to

follow his example, placed himself on his knees, and stooping down, they remained effectually concealed from observation by the rude parapet left in the rock. It would be difficult to describe the group and the scene that they witnessed; but from the mixture of foreign dresses, and the circumstance of many of the party being attired in seamen's habits, Colonel Pennington's suspicion, that it was altogether an affair of smugglers, did not appear improbable. However, there were females in the company, and Lord Mowbray's surprise and entertainment were extreme, as he saw his man, Le Brun, with all his airs and graces, lead out a remarkably pretty girl, French apparently by her dress, and perform a minuet with her in the midst of the surrounding party: the man playing the fiddle too, though partly obscured by a projecting side of the rock, he thought was his old acquaintance, Ben Hardy; and he recollected the fellow's casuistry when he questioned him about having always earned an honest livelihood. The minuet received great applause, and a song was called for; but before this began, the liquor was served round; and Lord Mowbray's dismay was extreme, as he saw the person who officiated as steward at the Castle step forward, attended by a fellow in his own livery, bearing a reeking bowl of some hot liquor, which the steward served out to each guest in rotation, and then the song commenced; it was very easy to any one who had once heard his voice, to recognize, in the strain that followed, the powerful note of Smiling Bill; and as the whole company joined in the chorus, and seemed too much taken up with their entertainment to observe any movement made by the party in ambush, Lord Mowbray jogged Colonel Pennington's elbow, and they crept away in silence.

It was well they had thought of moving, for the dying embers of the fire now scarcely sent up light enough to direct them in their path; and the moon had already passed behind the Castle, and left the shore in obscurity. They paused when they left the platform in front of the Chapel. "A pretty rascal that steward, my Lord, to be leagued with such a band!" observed Colonel Pennington: "they are, depend upon it, one-half of them smugglers from the opposite coast, and the other half their confederates on this side the water."

"I confess I am more sorry than surprised," said Lord Mowbray; "for I did not augur well of the characters who surrounded us on our arrival here. Do you remember, Pennington, the hang-dog countenance of that fellow whom they call Smiling Bill? It becomes, however, a serious matter, indeed, when I find the ma

holding chief authority in the Castle at the head of them: there is no saying exactly what may be in his power, or how far this misrule extends; it will require consideration before I act."

"True," replied Colonel Pennington, beginning to ascend the path which led to the Castle—"true enough, and I will give you my opinion on that point presently; meanwhile, I think, we had better regain our apartment quietly, and as quickly as we can; the party will else be separating: and should our knowledge of their proceedings be suspected, it may prove a means of preventing a full discovery of the facts:—depend upon it, you have artful knaves to deal with."

Lord Mowbray assented to this advice, but added, "I shall see my agent to-morrow, before we go; and I shall leave directions with him, to have the path from the Chapel to the beach, as well as every other access to it, blocked up. This will be one means of cutting off communication, and can excite no wonderment. The privacy of the immediate neighbourhood of the Castle requires the precaution."

By this time they had reached the summit of the cliff, and in a few moments re-entered the Castle walls. Every thing wore the same repose, and the same stillness reigned as when they crossed its dreary portal. It was clear that every inmate had forsaken it, and, with the exception of themselves, had been bidden to the festival of the cavern. This circumstance added still more to the conviction which both Lord Mowbray and Colonel Pennington felt, that the proceedings of the evening, from some motive or other, were intended to remain a secret; and although no immediate step was taken against the parties concerned, Lord Mowbray issued such orders on the morrow previous to his departure, as would probably render a recurrence of the same scenes difficult, if not impossible.

CHAPTER II.

The soote season that bud and bloom forth brings,
With green hath clad the hill, and eke the vale;
The nightingale with feathers new she sings;
The turtle to her mate hath told her tale;
Summer is come, for every spray now springs;
The hart hath hung his old head o'er the pale;
The buck in brake his winter coat he flings;
The fishes float with new repaired scale;
The adder all her slough away she flings;
The swift swallow pursueth the flies small;
The busy bee her honey now she brings;
Winter is gone that was the flowers' bale;
And thus I see, among those pleasant things,
Each care decays, and yet my sorrow springs. LORD SURREY.

LORD MOWBRAY felt, when he set off the next morning, that bleak and barren as he had thought this spot when he first came to it, he nevertheless could attach himself to its wild scenery. We grow to like those on whom we confer benefits, or to whom we are of use; and we become fond of a place which we feel to be our own, and to which our presence can be of material consequence; besides, a change which we look forward to anxiously in distant prospect, we frequently dread as it approaches nearer, and fifty times ere Lord Mowbray reached Montgomery Hall, he repented him of having consented to go there. "Perhaps," thought he, "this beautiful vision which haunts my imagination may prove different from what my fancy painted her when seen on the wilds of Dorsetshire; and should she prove, in fact, ever so beautiful, what is that to me?" With these and similar wayward thoughts, Lord Mowbray entered Montgomery Hall.

It was late in the evening when they arrived, and he had to pass through a tedious ordeal; for after having been introduced to General Montgomery, he was in due order presented to every individual of the society there assembled, by the General himself. "My niece, Lady Emily Lorimer; my niece, Lady Frances Lorimer; my friend and kinswoman, Miss Marian Macalpine—I beg her pardon for having forgotten to name her before; her friend, Miss Paterson—both of them near relations of my mother's; Mr. Samson Skinner, and Mr. Abraham Aldget, my friends and agents; and though last, not least, my worthy Knight of the Thistle, Sir Richard Townley."

Lord Mowbray, always shy, was peculiarly so on the present

occasion. One glance had told him that his fair huntress was Lady Emily Lorimer, but she did not seem to recognize him; and though at first this had been rather a relief, yet afterwards it was not flattering to his feelings; and, looking at her more leisurely, he thought she was not so handsome as he had fancied her to be; neither perhaps was she, in fact, as beautiful at this moment as when exercise and the fresh air, and the excitement of pursuing her hat when blown away by the wind had lent to her all those graces of action and emotion, which give to beauty its greatest, but at the same time its most evanescent charm.

While General Montgomery continued to go through the regular routine of introduction, Lord Mowbray merely bowed in silence; and the General, having fulfilled what he conceived to be an indispensable part of polite hospitality, hastened to his rubber of whist, the clock having struck nine; and the habit of portioning out time having become a part of his nature, nothing discomposed him so much as being obliged to forego the regular occupations of the regular hours: and happy are those whose youth has been so spent that this blessed love of order gradually settles into a fixed habit in declining years;—it is seldom or ever seen, where a life of vicious pleasure or idleness has previously unfitted the mind for those serene enjoyments, which attend a dignified and virtuous old age.

In General Montgomery, this was beautifully exemplified. He had passed gradually, and without any violent or abrupt transition, from active and healthful youth, into the vale of honoured years: all the finest pleasures of existence remained to him still, vivid and unimpaired; and when the hour came at which the card-table was set out, and his loved niece, Emily, was waiting for him with her gay defiance, the General felt that youth of spirit which continues to find interest in the simplest enjoyment.

Lord Mowbray having declined playing at cards, the usual party, consisting of Miss Macalpine, Sir R. Townley, the General and Lady Emily, sat down to whist. Mr. Aldget engaged Colonel Pennington at backgammon; Mr. Skinner was busily employed in examining a plan of the estate, with some proposed improvements annexed; and while Lady Frances worked some gold embroidery, Lord Mowbray pleased his eyes with looking at her white fingers; and now and then agreeing to some commonplace observation she made, or merely half dissenting by the interrogatory, "Do you think so?"

"What *a tiresome thing* it is," said Lady Frances, after a long

pause, and looking towards the card-table, "to do the same dull things at the same dull hour! That everlasting whist makes me quite sick. One of the reasons which induce me to hate the country is, that I see it takes effect upon every body, more or less, and renders them stupid, at least silent, which is much the same thing. I am afraid at last that I shall grow into a clock, and never say any thing but tic-tic."

"A clock!" rejoined Lord Mowbray, with a smile; "one might as well be a clock as any thing else, for aught I know; it would save one a deal of trouble to be wound up regularly, and set a-going for the four-and-twenty hours; besides, after all, few people say any thing better worth listening to than tic-tic!"

Lady Frances raised her eyes to the speaker, to see if it were possible this speech could have been pointed at her: but his Lordship's eyes were closed, or nearly so; and he seemed to have forgotten that it was necessary to speak at all, so long a silence followed this effort at conversation. "Doublets, by all that is unlucky!" suddenly exclaimed Colonel Pennington, in a voice which made them all start.

"Softly!" my good friend, cried General Montgomery, looking over his shoulder; "I believe he thinks he is storming a fort!"

"Bless me, Lady Emily! I wish you would mind what you are about!" cried Miss Macalpine; why you have trumped my queen, and lost the odd trick, and they are at nine; and that's a double and single, and the rubber, and there's eighteen-pence lost to me for ever: it's so much the mair provoking, that if ye would but mind, ye are no' so bad at it; but ye 're aye thinking o' something or anither—that's no' the game o'whist; what made you so heedless, lassie? you can play well enough when you mind what you are about; but that little head is running upon something else, I'm thinking!"

"Ah! do not scold me, my dear Alpinia!" (the name of affection which Lady Emily gave her.) "We shall beat them well, another evening."

"Pay me my half-crown, Emily!" said the General; "you know you would have a bet."

"There it is, dear uncle," said she, laughing; "but I will have two for it at some future time."

"Dearest and best!" cried the General, kissing her, "you shall have your revenge now, if you like it."

"Oh, no! not now, if you please; you know it is time for a little music."

"Ay, very true: let us have that delicious *Di Piacer!*" and, to

the regret of Miss Macalpine, music banished cards: not that she disliked music, only she like cards better.

"Is your Lordship fond of our Scottish airs?" said Miss Macalpine, adressing Lord Mowbray.

"I like them now and then, when they are sung with taste and spirit, and in the true Scotish style; but I am afraid," (smiling) "that my real predilection is for Italian music."

"Well, you shall hear Lady Emily sing

'Will ye go to the Ewebuchts, Marian?'

and tell me true, if ever ye heard the like, far or near!"

They now adjourned to the music-room: Lady Frances sat down to the piano; Lady Emily drew the harp towards her; the General took his flute, and the concert commenced.

There is something in a family concert, even when the performers are only moderately skilled in music, which is peculiarly harmonious, owing to a kindred touch and feeling; and also perhaps to the *habit* of studying and playing together: and if this be the case in merely instrumental pieces, how much more decidedly is it so in vocal music. Is there any thing more striking than the similar tones which harmonize so divinely together in the voices of near relations who sing in parts? they are like shades of the same colours, all differing, yet all agreeing, fading, mingling, contrasting, and blending in one perfectly harmonious whole. When listening to the concord of sweet sounds thus poured forth from fraternal and filial song, it is difficult to conceive that a moral concord should not always continue to exist between the parties; and that the soft melody of sweetly attuned voices should not pervade the whole of their intercourse with each other. But, alas! relations are parted—sometimes cruelly parted, by the jealous or evil passions of others: absence produces estrangement; estrangement leads to forgetfulness; and all the sweet influences of natural affection are dispersed, and vanish like those dulcet sounds which die in their very birth. It is, however, some consolation to think, that the ties of consanguinity cannot be broken by mortal hatred or mortal malice; they will, every now and then, make themselves to be felt: and the sound of a well-known voice, or the melody of an oft-sung air, will frequently bring back the tenderness of recollected love, after long years of cold neglect and apparent oblivion.

It was impossible, when hearing General Montgomery and his nieces tuning their voices together in song, not to feel soothed into

a forgetfulness of worldly evil; and even those persons who were least alive to tender impressions, acknowledged somewhat of this balmy sensation,—at least during its immediate influence. The General's voice was most peculiar: it still retained much of the power and charm it had once possessed, and was a clear deep tenor, as singular in its quality of tone, as he was himself unlike any being that ever lived in the union of sweetness with nobility of disposition. Lady Frances was a perfect musician; the ear found no fault with her execution and skill, but there was a touching richness in her sister's voice which spoke to every heart. Music was as necessary a mental aliment to this family as any other food is to common existence; and the General required from his nieces the tribute of a song every evening. Those who had no particular taste for music had ample freedom to absent themselves, and found abundant means of amusement in the library or the billiard-room.

Lord Mowbray having got over the first introduction, and being comfortably established on a sofa, was pleased with what he conceived to be the usual routine of the house. It suited him exactly: there was an absence of form, and a tranquillity in the manners of General Montgomery, which were precisely according to his ideas of comfort. The visionary admiration which he had entertained in his fancy for Lady Emily was considerably lowered in tone; but Lady Frances's beauty was splendid, and he found no great difficulty in transferring his *penchant* from the one sister to the other. As he sat, therefore, during that first evening of his arrival, admiring the graceful bend of her well-turned neck, and watching the motion of her fairy fingers, he thought inwardly that, providing a woman could always look as beautiful, he should care very little whether she ever did any thing better worth doing than net silk purses.

From this wise reverie he was disturbed rather unpleasantly by Miss Macalpine's affirmation that he had never heard any thing so charming as "Will you go to the Ewebuchts, Marian?" He prepared, however, with as good a grace as he could, to have his ears excruciated by a drawling Scotch tune. In this he had been agreeably disappointed; it was a charming air, sung with exquisite feeling and simplicity; and Lady Emily afterwards proved that, though she sung Scotch airs to please Miss Macalpine, and Handel to please the General, she was not insensible to the power of Italian music. On the contrary, she sang Caraffa's exquisite airs with a style and expression which enchanted even the delicate and practised ear of Lord Mowbray; and as music was declared to be the

ruling taste and grand business of the house, he felt relieved to think that his complaisance would not be put to the rack while he listened to it.

General Montgomery at length drew out his watch, and pronounced the hour to be come for retiring. "Before you all go," he said, "I must call a Council of War to know what plans are formed for the amusement of the morrow—we must do the honours to Lord Mowbray, and show him the beauties of our forest."

Colonel Pennington immediately proposed a fishing-party, and Lady Emily warmly seconded it: "because," she said, "we must go by the famous bed where the lilies of the valley grow in such profusion; and I want to procure some, roots and all—so, if you please, dear uncle, I will take Rose to help me."

Lady Frances observed sneeringly, "Emily cannot go any where without Rose, you know;—Rose is one of her most obsequious slaves, and Emily cannot do without a slave: I am sure, if my place is wanted, I shall very joyfully resign it, for I am not particularly fond of either fishing or flower-gathering."

"No, no! my Queen," cried General Montgomery, "I cannot do without *you;* but there is plenty of room for pretty Rose, if Emily wants her: besides, you know, we shall pass close to the Duke of Godolphin's, and you can pay a visit to your friend Lady Arabella."

"I thank you, my dear uncle," replied Lady Frances, brightening up; "I shall extremely enjoy seeing Lady Arabella,"

And now every thing seemed to be easily arranged. Miss Macalpine, from certain associations and recollections, had conceived the idea that she had a right to appropriate Lord Mowbray to herself: she had formed a design upon him, which, though in itself quite innocent, gave an amusing importance and mystery to her manner, as she began counting heads, and arranging the different persons in the different carriages after her own wishes, finishing thus:—"And then, Lord Mowbray, I'm thinking, will like to go in the pony phaeton, and it's just the same to me where I'm placed. I can just go with him, you know."

General Montgomery winked to Lady Emily; for he always saw through these little contrivances, and enjoyed them.—"But you forget, Miss Macalpine," he said, turning to her, "that we all want to enjoy Lord Mowbray's society, and we are not going to resign him to you *en tête-à-tête.*"

"Oh weel," said Miss Macalpine, defeated, but not put out of temper, "have it just as you please, General: I only thought, the

other carriages would be filled, and that you would like to have Lady Emily to yourself, General."

"As you would like to have Lord Mowbray all to yourself—eh! Miss Macalpine?" said the General archly—"but leave us to marshal our troops our own way."

Lord Mowbray, who knew nothing of the genuine goodness and singleness of heart which distinguished Miss Macalpine, just understood enough of this dialogue to be alarmed at the prospect held out to him, for the ensuing day, of being imprisoned in a pony phaeton, with a very plain and rather formal old maid, who spoke with a Scotch accent, and took snuff; he therefore really felt grateful to the General for making a diversion in his favour, while poor Miss Macalpine, a little disconcerted, walked out of the room. "Confess," said the General, laughing, "that was what you call taking the place by storm-was it not, my Lord? But if poor Miss Macalpine has her little foibles, they are so amply compensated for by her noble qualities, that one may the more readily allow oneself a little laugh now and then at her expense. Do not, however, suffer this desperate attempt of the enemy to discompose your slumbers—depend upon it, there are carriages enough and to spare for all our party."

Then followed the parting compliments for the night,—the hoping Lord Mowbray would feel himself at home, the kindly trust that Colonel Pennington had long done so,—and they retired to their several apartments.

"What sort of a day is it?" were the first words of Lady Emily as her maid entered her room the next morning.

"Rather overcast, my Lady," was the reply; and many were the anxious looks she gave towards the window, during the time she was dressing, to ascertain whether it would or would not rain.

"Always the rain and the fine weather, Emily?" said her sister to her: "when will you learn to forget there is such a thing as weather?"

"Never, sister, till I forget there are such things as pleasant fields and woods and walks to ramble through, and which I cannot enjoy when the wet prevents my resorting to them."

"Well, upon the whole," said Lady Frances, yawning as she too prepared to rise, "I do sometimes envy you in the country, because you find so much amusement in things that don't amuse me in the least; but then you have not come out yet, though you are a year older than I was when I was presented; and I have a *notion*, Emily, that a season in London would make a wondrous

change in your ideas—cure you, in short, of this sentimental rusticity."

"If you mean to say that I should enjoy the amusements of London excessively, I have no doubt of it; but why should you doubt that my delight also in the country is genuine?"

"Why? why, because it is so unnatural."

"Oh Frances, love, say rather that you are unnatural. Do not, however, let us dispute about it, but, on the contrary, try how well you can entertain yourself this day, and I will do every thing in my power to please you."

So saying, with light heart and bounding step, she descended to the breakfast-room. "I am sure it will not rain to-day," said Lady Emily, after the salutations of the morning had passed. "Do you think it will, dear uncle?"

"No, my Emily!" he replied, tapping the tube of the weather-glass; "I can answer for it, it will not."

"It is just the very day for fishing," observed the Colonel: "the fish will rise beautifully: such a mild atmosphere, neither dark nor light; and such a dappled gray in the East."

"Oh! what a charming day we shall have!" cried Lady Emily. "Come, Alpinia, make haste, put on your walking-shoes, and arm yourself for an expedition with me. I am going lily-hunting with Rose, and we must not be baulked of our enjoyment for want of a few sensible preparations and common comforts. You see, I practise as I preach:" and she pointed, laughing, to her walking-boots, which could not disguise all the beauty of the small feet they defended; and her dark silk pelise, which showed to advantage her fair and delicate complexion sparkling with added colour from the excitement of the moment: "and now," said she, "we can brave ditches and brambles, and pursue our recreation unimpeded by finery at least."

Lady Frances cast a contemptuous glance at her sister. "You really have made yourself a proper figure," said she. "I wonder how my uncle can allow it!"

Not so Lady Frances herself, whose attire was a light summer costume, as costly and fashionable as though she had been going to some *fête* in town. Beautiful she was, undoubtedly; but as Lord Mowbray's eyes dwelt on her, and then turned to her sister, he could not help reading a transcript of the character of each in their choice of an habiliment for the morning's diversion: and the silent comparison was *in favour* of Emily. It was decided, how-

ever, that he should accompany Lady Frances in one carriage, with General Montgomery, and Sir Richard Townley; while the Colonel, Lady Emily, Miss Macalpine, and Miss Paterson, occupied the other. Rose Delvin was to follow in the pony phaeton; where, as they were going a considerable distance, and did not expect to be back till dark, arrangements had been made to convey sundry cold refreshments, of which Lady Emily had undertaken the charge.

"But," said General Montgomery, "we should be badly off, I fear, if I trusted entirely to my sweet Emily in this department of the day's business; for I am sure, at any time, a flower would carry it over cold ham and chickens.—Are the refreshments put into the phaeton?" asked the General, turning to the servant who announced the carriages.

Lady Emily looked rather mortified at this observation of her uncle; and said, half playfully, half reproachfully, "Why, my dear uncle, with all my romance, I do not really imagine myself sufficiently spiritualised to live upon flowers and air: but, suppose I did, do you think that your giddy Emily would forget her uncle's wishes and comforts?" The General, affectionately pressing Lady Emily's hand, kissed her, and said gaily, "Come, we are all ready, I believe; let us be off. The day will not be too long."

In their drive through the New Forest, the General frequently caused the carriages to stop, in order that he might point out some beautiful combination of trees, or some peep of the distant country seen through them. On these occasions, as on all similar ones, Lady Frances seemed wholly unconscious of what was passing; but when they moved on again, and that the General's attention was engaged in conversing upon some agricultural matter with Sir Richard Townley, she talked to Lord Mowbray of the Opera—of the last presentation at Court,—of the *débuts* of fashionable singers and admired dancers; discussing the merits of each with rather more assurance than seemed properly to belong to her age and sex. Lord Mowbray professed his ignorance upon most of these subjects, and his indifference to others, in a way provoking to Lady Frances; though it served to give an additional stimulus to her finding a topic of discourse which might engage his attention. "Are the operas better in Italy," at last said Lady Frances, "than in London?"

"Far better," was the short reply.

"How so?"

"Why, because, in the first place, music is indigenous to the soil *of Italy;* and in the next, we never have an opera performed in this

country as it is written; there is always something rejected or something interpolated, in order to suit it, as it is called, to the genius of an English audience; its own genius evaporates. Perhaps, after all, it is not that the opera in Italy is in itself so superior; for, I think, I have not seen on any stage in Italy the combination of musical talent I have occasionally seen on the opera-stage in London; but there is something in the air of the country which renders us more susceptible of enjoyment; we feel we are in the land of song, and give ourselves up to a mere existence of indolent and pleasurable sensation."

"You speak of Italy as if you loved it better than your own country—that is, better than London?"

Lord Mowbray smiled at the idea of London being one's own country, and standing specifically for the whole British nation. "Are the ladies of Italy," continued his fair catechist, "much handsomer than those of England?"

"That depends upon taste. Italian beauty is all dark, forcible, and natural. I never saw an affected Italian woman—a vain one? yes—but their vanity is as undisguised as their other sentiments; they are less employed about the fashions of the day—I should say, generally speaking, less taken up about the frivolous pursuits of the toilette; they unconsciously imbibe something of the taste they see around them; and the mere cares of dress and personal appearance have less power over their minds."

Lady Frances coloured, and looked displeased. "Your Italians, my Lord," said she, "are, perhaps, more secure in their own charms—more sure of conquest—they can afford to be negligent; we English women pay at least a higher compliment to your sex, by our very anxiety and mistrust of our unassisted attractions."

"It is a compliment I, for one, could well dispense with," replied Lord Mowbray.

Lady Frances bit her lip almost through with vexation, but was not to be foiled by this unusual language. A thought of her own transcendent beauty inspired her with new courage, and the absence of all objects to try her power on—nay, the very difficulty she experienced in extracting any thing in the shape of a compliment, gave her an additional stimulus to exert all her wiles, and not to allow Lord Mowbray's heart to escape the snares she set for it. She remained silent, however, as if reflecting upon what he had said; and contented herself with lifting her eyes occasionally to Lord Mowbray's, with a sort of imploring gentleness, which she well knew how

"I mind the time when I could fly ow'r our Scottish braes just like Lady Emily yonder," said Miss Macalpine, as she too, with an affectionate smile, gazed after the nymph-like figure which gradually lessened on their view. "Do you not remember, Colonel, those days when I was a lassie, at Heathersden, and we used to gang up to the Crag Point?"

"Do I remember? to be sure I do," replied the Colonel abruptly. "I have not lost my memory! Sometimes I wish I had," he added, in an under tone, and with a softened expression.

"Ah, well, those days are past and over; I wish they had never been," said Miss Macalpine.

"And so do I, Miss Macalpine, perhaps; but what then?"

"I'm thinking," she went on to say, without heeding his observation—"I'm thinking it's hard we canna just remain young a' the days we hae to bide below, there 's no' so mony o' them; I never could find the use o' growing auld."

"Ah!" rejoined Colonel Pennington, "we are not able to see the *pleasure* of growing old, I grant you; but the *use* of it is another question."

Their conversation was interrupted by a call from Lord Mowbray. "Do come and support Lady Frances," he cried, "for her shoe has stuck in this muddy ground:" and at the same moment they beheld Lady Frances, with one foot in the air, and the delicate silk shoe covered with dirt and sticking in the mire. "Hech, Sirs! the lassie's come out in a pair o' silk slippers to the fishing," exclaimed Miss Macalpine; "did you ever see the like o' that?"

"What made you do such a silly thing?" cried Colonel Pennington angrily. "Here you are now without shoes; and somebody must walk back to get you a pair, and the day will be lost in going and coming: that is always the way when one has any thing to do with women."

Luckily one of the servats was within call, and he was despatched to buy a pair of shoes, such as could be found at the neighbouring village: in the mean time, Lord Mowbray spread his cloak upon the banks of the river; and on this, Lady Frances was obliged to repose, and take to her book with the best grace she could, in default of other amusement; for, to her disappointment, Lord Mowbray, after paying her compliments on her poetical studies, betook himself, though without much alacrity, to his fishing station.

"I wish," said Miss Macalpine, with a glance at Lady Frances's book, "that ye had brought a wiser-like companion wi' ye, my Lady;

yon chiel, wi' a' the glamer o' his genius, has turned more heads and hearts tapsalterie than eneugh."

"Pooh!" said Lady Frances, "do not fall into the cant of old Reviews—he is divine—which of our poets is read with more pleasure?"

"And do you never read for peace and improvement? Pleasure is a'e thing and profit's anither; thae twa dinna whiles haud theg-ither; better a mutchkin o' the ane than a pint stoup o' t'ither."

"Dear Miss Macalpine, a truce with truisms and moral sentences; I want something more than peace, if you please; I am not come to such a low ebb as to want peace. When I read, I read for pleasure: I like Lord Byron and Moore better than Young's Night Thoughts."

"Lady Frances," replied Miss Macalpine, with infinity gravity, "I was young once mysel', and had aye a turn to the reading, when reading wasna in vogue as it is now; or rather I should say, when ilka bodny didna think it needfu' to be ca'd a reader, let alane a writer; but this I ken, that if ye dinna read mair purpose-like works than yon, ye'll fare the waur when ye 're an auld woman."

"When I am an *old woman!*" said Lady Frances, looking up. —"Really, Miss Macalpine, you have such—a—a—very odd, abrupt way of expressing yourself—an old woman, indeed!"

"Yes, we must e'en take up in that same, like it or no'," continued the simple-minded Miss Macalpine: "we never stand still; mind or bodie, we 're aye going back or fore: if ye dinna feel that every day, as it hurtles past, hasna put some good intill ye, be assured it has ta'en some awa. But ye luke tired-like, my bonnie birdie."

"I am very sorry," said Lady Frances peevishly, "that I even came at all upon this horrid expedition: I wonder how I could be such a fool!"

"Hech, Sir!" cried Miss Macalpine, jumping up, "if Lord Mowbray hasna hooked a fine salmon!"

A fish he had, most certainly; and away went Miss Macalpine to see him bring it to land; while Lady Frances, thanks to her silk shoes, could not move a step, having lost the one, and the other being sent on by the servant as a pattern. There she was obliged to sit; and she had the mortification to behold Miss Macalpine standing by Lord Mowbray, and directing him how to let the fish run, and how to wind it up again: when, in the midst of her learned directions, crack went rod and line and all! and the favourite fish-

ing apparatus of Colonel Pennington, owing to Lord Mowbray's want of skill, was utterly destroyed.

Colonel Pennington, who had been an observer of what was going on, threw down his own rod, and came as fast as he could to Lord Mowbray's assistance, but all too late! so that when he saw the fragments of his famous tackle lying broken on the margin of the stream, he could not contain his vexation, but gave way to the natural ebullition of his temper. "Why, my Lord, what have you been about here?—Miss Marian, I thought I had instructed *you* better than that! and if *he* never went a-fishing before, that at least *you* could have told him something better than to let him break my very best rod into a thousand pieces! Why in the name of common sense did you not let out your line? What a day's sport you have lost, and broken my very best rod! the rod that played so beautifully, and would almost bear to have been bent double in skilful hands!"

"My dear Colonel, pray forgive me! I never will put your patience to the test again: and I will write to town for the very best fishing-rod that can be made."

"Forgive you, my Lord? that is not the question; but it's enough to put a man in a passion to see people so foolish."

He then gathered up the broken fragments, and went off grumbling something about women being always in the way, and always spoiling any rational scheme of amusement; and muttering something too about men being as bad, when they attempted what they knew nothing about.

Lord Mowbray, completely tired of the whole thing, felt really glad to take refuge by the side of Lady Frances; and as the servant had now arrived with a pair of shoes for her, she was once more enabled to walk, which became doubly necessary, as the deceitful winds of an English spring had chilled her. "I am afraid, Lady Frances," said Lord Mowbray, "that you are suffering from cold. Suppose we take a quick walk and pursue General Montgomery; there cannot be a better method of warming yourself."

Lady Frances, after a few exclamations against the clumsy substitutes she had found for her delicate shoes, acceded to the proposal; and Lord Mowbray, offering one arm to her and the other to Miss Macalpine, set off with the two ladies at a quicker pace than Miss Macalpine thought it possible Lady Frances could ever have attained to. "That's right; it's just a pity my Lady Frances hadna your arm to gar her tak' a brisk walk every day o' her life," said

Miss Macalpine; "that would put a rose in her cheek! There's nothing in the world like air and exercise for that."

When they joined Lady Emily, she displayed what she called her treasures—a basket which Rose could scarcely carry, laden with lily roots.

"I fear me," (said Miss Macalpine, shaking her head) they'll no' do: this is no' the season for transplanting."

"Nay, dear Alpinia, say not so: I will make it the season. You know the French maxim, *ce qui est differé est perdu!* To plant a flower or a pleasure, give me the present moment! What do you say, Lord Mowbray?" she added gaily.

To a mind not wholly sophisticated, there was something delightful in this wholesome appetite for innocent enjoyment; and Lord Mowbray felt it renovate his being, as he replied, "Well, Lady Emily, I must confess that I should like to sun myself in the atmosphere of your happy nature! But" (turning to Lady Frances) "these are only the susceptibilities of the moment:—they cannot last."

Lord Mowbray did not know that, on the contrary, they were the healthful principles of an innocent mind; susceptibilities indeed they were, arising out of a much more stable source than he dreamt of in all his philosophy.

"What nonsense!" said Lady Frances, shrugging her shoulders.

"I am not so sure of that either," rejoined Lord Mowbray: "I only regret my inability to share the feeling."

"Indeed!" rejoined Lady Frances coldly; and, at the same time, Sir Richard Townley and the General appeared in sight.

"Well," said the good General, "what have you been about, and what sport have you had? Frances has doubtless read her book twice over, and Lord Mowbray has caught me a famous dish of fish."

Both parties yielded guilty of omission, but assigned many weighty circumstances in extenuation; Lady Frances was frozen with the cold; Lord Mowbray had certainly caught fish—but then the fish had broken his rod, and thus put a final end to his attempts for that day. "Oh! it's all just as it should be," exclaimed the General; "we have had a day's harmless diversion; and if it has ried my honest friend Tom Pennington's temper, that's all the harm, in fact, that has been done. I beg France's pardon though; forgot her fine shoes! And now it is time that we return home, or more sweet hours have been wiled away than we have taken ac-

count of. The happy, they say, never count the hours; yet that is not my opinion either; we grow misers, I am certain, of our treasures, and learn a wonderful precision, on the contrary, in our estimate of time, in proportion as we truly enjoy it."

"Oh yes! dear uncle," said Lady Emily; "I have been asking every moment what o'clock it was, I was so afraid that we should not have been able to have dug up the lilies; but we have effected every thing that I wanted to do, and the day has completely answered to me."

"I wish every day may so answer to you, my dearest and best!"

"A kind, kind wish!" replied Lady Emily; "and one that I am sure will be fulfilled, so long as you love me!" And thus saying, she passed the General's arm through her own, and the whole party took the road to the carriages.

When they reached them, it was found that Colonel Pennington still loitered behind; and after waiting a full hour for him, he sent word that he had hooked a fine salmon trout; and were he to attempt to land it in a hurry, he should break another rod. He begged the party, therefore, to return home, and promised to follow as soon as he had finished his day's sport.

The pony phaeton was accordingly left to convey him, and the produce of his skill, back to the hall; while the remainder of the party, being disposed of in the other carriages, commenced their route homewards.

CHAPTER III.

Awake! the morning shines, and the fresh field
Calls us—we lose the prime, to mark how spring
Our tender plants, how blow the citron groves,
What drops the myrrh, and what the balmy reed;
How Nature paints her colours; how the bee
Sits on the bloom, extracting liquid sweet."

MILTON'S PAR. LOST.

NOTWITHSTANDING the fatigues of the preceding day, Lady Emily, "with spirits pure, and slumbers light, that fly the approach of morn," was early up. "April showers bring May flowers," 'tis said; "and so they have," cried she, opening her window, and *looking out* at a scene not less fresh and fair than herself. "Come,

Frances, rise! it is a shame to lose this beautiful morning. Sister! sister! awake!" as she undrew the curtains of her bed.—" What! still asleep, or only feigning? I think I see your eyelids twinkling.

'And winking Mary-buds begin
To ope their golden eyes;
With every thing that pretty bin:
My lady sweet, arise!'"

" Oh! how tiresome you are, Emily; you have just awakened me from the nicest dream;—do close the bed-curtain, and let me dream it over again."

" Oh, no! I will not for the world. I want to take you from the nicest dream to the sweetest reality. It is the last day of May, and it is a day worthy to be enjoyed in the clear, cool hour of prime: haste, Frances, haste! let us bring my uncle home a lapful of violets, before he breakfasts; you know how much he enjoys the fragrance of those wild flowers."

" Nonsense, Emily! as if the gardener could not gather those which grow in the garden. They are infinitely sweeter, and one has no trouble; besides, I do not care about flowers—they are so insipid as every thing is that pertains to the country. Give me a splendid equipage, such as I was driving in, in idea, and in which one appears to so much advantage, precisely like a fine picture in a handsome frame; there is no situation in which a lady's beauty is so well displayed; while a thousand hovering beaux pace around, waiting for a look, a nod, a smile, though they affect to have their eyes fixed on vacancy, and die with envy when the favoured flirt leans his gloved hand upon the carriage-door, perfumed with the last essences imported from Paris, which are superior to all the mawkish natural sweets in the world;—and then the soft nothings addressed to one's ear, that are so vivifying and so new, because it is impossible to remember of what they consist—all this is only to be found in dear London. And of all this you cruelly deprived me, by waking me with your dull, prozy, school-girl sentiment about a ditch, and nettles, and violets, and dry sticks in a half-green hedge—oh! it is provoking: do draw the curtains—the light puts my eyes out. Go, go like a good girl to your violets, and Rose Delvin, the farmer's daughter; she will suit you much better than I shall; and leave me to dream, since" (with a yawn and a sigh) " it is all one can do here." And Frances buried her face in the down of the pillow.

Emily sighed as she obeyed her sister; but when she walked into

the garden, a sense of delight came over her that banished reflection, and she bounded along as gay as the insect that courted the sunbeam. From the formal-dressed garden, Emily passed on to an open grove, and thence into the chase (as it was still called), overspread with wild flowers of a thousand hues. "Though I am no longer a child," said she, as she stooped to gather a knot of crimson-tipped daisies, "I think I love them as much as when I used to fill my frock with them long years ago." And she went on and on, culling as she went, till she came to the boundary of the inclosure. Here a row of willows bordered a streamlet that divided the chase from the road; but when she reached the spot, where a little wooden bridge usually afforded passage to the neighbouring villagers, she found it broken down and impassable, and several of the trees hacked and hewn in a merciless manner around it.

"How is this?" said Emily to herself, and pausing; "what has occasioned all this mischief? how is this, and how shall I pass?" and she half-sprung forward to leap the streamlet; then checked herself, seeing the attempt would be fruitless; when, looking and perceiving no one nigh, she hastily drew off her shoes, and then her stockings, and prepared to ford the water. In another moment she put in one foot, then the other, its coldness catching her breath; but, in she went, notwithstanding; and, as she saw her white feet shining through the current of the limpid water, she laughed in gaiety of her heart—it might be at their beauty, it might be at doing a thing she had never done before. Who can account for the mirth of a youthful, innocent spirit?

"What would Frances say now, if she saw me?"

"She would say that you are surely very adventurous, Lady Emily," cried a voice which was familiar to her.

Emily started, looked around, and beheld, sauntering behind the willows, their guest Lord Mowbray! She coloured, dropped her garments in the water, and, hastening to the opposite bank, sat down. "My Lord! pray leave me," she exclaimed, breathless with surprise and confusion; "I request you to leave me directly."

"Accident alone brought me here; I can only beg a thousand pardons for my unintentional intrusion," replied Lord Mowbray, bowing as he spoke. He took the path towards the hall, but not, as Emily observed, till he had gathered up the flowers she had dropped.

This accidental meeting greatly discomposed her and disturbed the

promised pleasure of her walk; but, replacing her dress, she made an effort to forget its occurrence, and hastened on to Delvin's cottage. When she lifted the latch of the garden-door, Emily beheld Ambrose Philips, a young farmer, who, to use a village phrase, kept company with Rose, leaning over the low wicket, and holding her hand in his. So deeply were they engaged in conversation that they did not perceive her approach.—"Rose, Rose, good morning, Rose!" was several times repeated in vain: at last Ambrose started and turned round; down rolled his hat; he pulled his thick brown locks with one hand in token of respect, while he sprawled with the other for the falling hat, and bowing, slunk away.

"Why, Rose," said Lady Emily, smiling, "I am afraid I am come at an unlucky moment; I am earlier than you expected—where is your mother? and Andrew?"

"Very true, my Lady; I did not expect your Ladyship quite so soon; but we are always glad to see you—won't you come in and rest a bit, my Lady? But, bless me, here is all the tail of your Ladyship's gown daggled up to the knees; well, it is lucky we have got a spark of fire, for I was just going to boil father's milk for his breakfast:" but when Rose turned to the large fire-place, there was none.

"You have been engaged with other sparks, I believe, Rose, and forgot the milk."

"Sparks!" repeated Rose with a conscious blush; "what does your ladyship mean? I am only engaged to Ambrose; your Ladyship knows it is all fixed. Farmer Philips has promised to give up his farm to his son; and so father and mother have given their consent, and we're to be married next Midsummer, my Lady, if you please."

"It pleases me very much, indeed, Rose, for your sake; every body says Ambrose is a good industrious young man. Remember, Rose, I will give you your wedding-gown."

"Your Ladyship is always good and kind; but, excuse my freedom, I wish we could hear of you buying your own!"

"All in good time, Rose; but I am so happy now, that I do not wish for any change; I can fancy none happier than my present lot!"

"No, sure! well your ladyship must be right;—but I thought every body liked to be married—that is,——but dear me, how wet you are!" she added wringing the gown.

"No wonder, Rose, that I am wet:—and Lady Emily related what had occurred.

"Why, there now," said Rose, "did not father say that something vexatious would befall? Do you know that that wicked black Giles merely because he had a spite against Ambrose, who was hired to finish the bridge, while t'other was out of work, and no one would employ him, is suspected of having broken it down, and cut and hacked the willows there, out of mere wickedness. My father is gone to depose, I think they call it—yes, depose before Mr. Allen all he knows of this business, and my mother has gone with him, and that is why they are not at home:" but just as Rose spoke, the old couple approached, and Emily listened with great patience to a long detail of the story over again, which was summed up by a declaration that if the Magistrate could find it in law, to clap Giles in prison, till such time as he was sent beyond seas, it would be doing the whole village a service.

Lady Emily equally endeared herself to her humble friends, as she did to those of her own sphere, by listening with a kind and unaffected sympathy to the subject of their interests; and, in the present case, comforted the Delvins, by saying, she was sure her uncle would assist in repairing their bridge, as well as in making good any other mischief that had been done to their little property. "Ay, dear young lady," replied the old man, "we are all sure that the good General will do every thing that is kind: but we old folks, somehow, like old things; and there is no saying when once an old friend is broke down, how he may look when he is patched up again. I remember that bridge now, man and boy, these last fifty years: and my heart misgives me that its downfall bodes no good: well, patience and time—I've seen enough of the one, but Maud there says I haven't always enough of the other."

"We have all our faults, you know, good Delvin," replied Lady Emily, smiling; "and I am sure your wife loves you, faults and all; that is the only way to love and be loved! And my uncle will take care that your bridge is mended, take my word for it. In the mean time, I want Rose to accompany me: will you let her come with me?"

"Ay! to be sure, my Lady; and proud to attend your Ladyship."

Rose's hat was tied on in a moment; and she was not less a rose, though a rustic one, than the aerial and sylph-like being whom she was called upon to attend.

Nature seemed gaily awake this fine May morning; every thing was joyously busy; the thrushes and blackbirds were flitting from bush to bush, and sending forth at intervals their exulting note of happiness, more thrillingly delicious even than their continuous song, which, while it told their own felicity, begot delight in others. The bee flitted past in many a returning circle, sounding his tiny horn; here and there a yellow butterfly, like a winged flower, settled on the new spring daisy; the lambs bleated and gambolled around their dams, as though the Creator's gift of mere existence were sufficient joy; and the unpanniered ass, relieved from its burthen for a while, was suffered to taste the dainties of the dewy herbage unmolested and at peace. But, in the midst of this joyousness, Emily was thoughtful. "I am sorry," she said aloud, though she was rather speaking to herself than addressing her companion—"I am sorry Lord Mowbray saw me fording the rivulet. Frances will think I did it on purpose to be seen by him; but how could I dream of his being up at this early hour?"

Rose meanwhile was busy gathering the violets, and her apron was full of purple sweets. "Bless me! my Lady, look here!" she exclaimed; "see what a lovely nest I have found!"

Emily ran to look at it. "What a beautiful thing is a bird's nest!" she exclaimed, contemplating it, as Rose drew aside the bushy screen which shaded it; "how wonderful! what pains the parent bird has taken to weave all those curious materials together. There, let the branches close over it again; look at it no more, for they say that strange hands disturb the quiet purity of the nest, and the bird ceases to love it when polluted by the touch."

At that moment they were startled by a large spaniel, which brushed past them; and the next, by the appearance of a young man, of very handsome figure, who was approaching Rose in a familiar manner; but, on seeing Lady Emily, stopped, and, bowing with the air of one versed in the manners of the world, said, "I hope you will forgive my intrusion, Lady Emily; I came to inquire of Rose Delvin, whether her father thinks I have any chance of finding trout in the stream to-day: for Andrew is my Isaac Walton, and I submit, as a scholar should do, with all due deference to his opinion."

While speaking thus to Lady Emily, his eyes were talking another language to Rose. She blushed scarlet through the clear brown of her sun-dyed cheek, and dropped the thick fringes of her

eyelids, as she replied,—"Father is at home, and will be glad, Sir, to be of any use to you."

Again the latter apologised to Lady Emily; and, whistling his dog after him, leaped lightly over a broken part of the hedge, and passed on.

"Who is that young gentleman, Rose? He seems to be well acquainted with my name; but I do not recollect ever to have seen him."

"La! my lady, I thought every one knew the handsome Squire Carlton, of the Manor-House! it is the second spring he has been here. He has been kind to Ambrose, and is a very civil gentleman. He promises to be very kind to me too, and it is not long ago that he brought me a nice new ribbon, and gave me a new, beautiful, golden sovereign. But I don't know how it is, I have never worn the ribbon, and the sovereign has given me bad dreams of nights —so I put my pockets from under my head. But pray—pray, my Lady—don't tell this to father and mother, for it's all a great, *great* secret!"

"Why so, Rose?"

"Why only because," stripping a bit of May-flower to pieces as she spoke; "why only because father—that is to say, Ambrose—that is to say—to tell you the truth, my Lady, mother said she did'nt altogether like the Squire coming so often to our cottage; and talked something about *Flirtations;* and said as how that young women of my station had better not be talking to great gentlemen folks: and so I was afeard to tell them of my ribbon and my sovereign."

"Indeed, Rose, I believe that your mother was very right: she loves you better than any body else can, and has your true interest at heart. Oh! if my mother were but alive—I am sure I should hide nothing from her."

"But what can I do, my Lady?"

"I advise you, my dear Rose, by no means to have any secret from your mother. Tell her what you have told me; give her Mr. Carlton's gifts to return to him, and I will buy you a ribbon that you may wear on Sunday proudly before any body; yes, and give you a golden sovereign into the bargain, that will lie under your pillow without disturbing your rest."

In the eagerness of this conversation, they turned a corner of the lane, and came unexpectedly upon a numerous company of gyp-

sies. There were so many of this wandering crew, that Emily, though interested in their mysterious race, felt somewhat alarmed, and was hastily retreating, when one of them cried out, "Never fear, pretty lasses, do not run away; we'll never harm you! come now, and we'll give you news of your sweethearts."

"Hush!" said another, in the jargon of the tribe—"Puro Baros Rias—Behee."

"And here is moon-eyed Rose," said another, "the prettiest girl in the village. Come, cross our hands, lady,—there's a sweet lady!—with a bit of silver, and we will tell you your fortune—all that will befall you. There's good fortune, lady, in your eye, and there's a fine family and a great lord awaits you."

"And you, too," said another man to Rose, "don't you be envious now of the handsome lady, for you, too, will ride in your coach, and be as gay as the best, and as fine as the finest, and laugh at all your poor neighbours."

"Come," said Emily, somewhat distressed by their crowding round her—"come, good people! I will have my fortune told, if you will send out some of your women to tell it me. Are there none in your tents?"

"Yes; there's women enow, I warrant you. Call out little Lushee Lovel. Lushee, Lushee! the lady wants thee, thou be'est well-read in palmistry! Come forth."

Upon this, a half-naked girl, with long straight black hair, that hung quite over her eyes, and reached below her waist, crawled from beneath one of the tents, and leaping up, and parting her hair with her two hands, came forward. A small, wire-haired, lean, sharp-faced cur, with a long tail, and pointed ears standing straight up, followed her on three legs, the fourth being crippled, and contracted under the body; and yelped so, for some minutes, that no other voice could be heard. "Silence Jukel! silence her nasty tongue," cried a fierce-looking man, as he threw a stick at it.

"Nay, now do not hurt the dog, master, or it shall not go well with thee," said Lushee, snatching the creature up in her arms; "Lushee can work in the night or in the day, and has a bit for her friends and a buffet for her foes. What do you want with me, Riena?" softening her voice as she addressed Emily; "shall I tell thee thy destiny?" and she cast her *long cut* glittering eyes around, pausing for assistance from her comrades.

"Lushee," said one of the company, in an under voice, "Rie

na Burtsee Gurho, Dai a Behee;" and the speaker, evidently not wishing to be understood, or to be heard speaking, by Lady Emily or her companion, turned away to stir a kettle, which, suspended between two sticks, was steaming with savory smell over the fire, and by which sat a venerable-looking man, who ever and anon blew the flame with his breath, and kept feeding it with dried leaves and turf. At the same time, another woman, coming from beneath the tent, cried—"No rup—sonnikey—sonnikey," and jogged Lushee's elbow.

"Thou art a great lady," continued Lushee, looking intently at Lady Emily till she coloured again, "and a good lady; I hope no offence, sweet?" smiling and shewing her white teeth. "Be not afraid, Lushee will do thee no harm, nor dirty thy pretty pink fingers, though her's be so black. Now dost see, lady, thou wilt have some troubles to go through, and there be many crosses in thy path; thou hast an enemy where thou thinkest thou hast a friend. Hast no friend, lady?" looking up to know if she had guessed right.

"Many, I hope," answered Emily.

"Ah! many is ofttimes worse than none—look carefully, lady sweet, for the adder is under thy threshold; but thou'lt come out of all thy troubles at last: and a great, great lady thou art, and a greater yet shall be. Now put a little silver in Lushee's hand, and I will tell thee a power of fine things." Lady Emily, laughing incredulously, endeavoured to withdraw her hand. "Do not fear!" said the gipsy girl, "Lushee will do thee no harm, nor stain thy pretty white hand with her brown fingers. Now as I was telling thee—where was I?—thou wilt have some troubles to go through, and there be many crosses in thy path, but thou wilt come out of them all at last. Now put a little silver in the palm of my hand, and I have a great deal more to tell thee. There is a dark lady wishes thee no good, and there is a dark gentleman that loves thee dearly. Do ye now cross my hand with another sixpence and Lushee will tell thee yet more; I see *the lines plainer under a sixpence*." And Lushee laughed, displaying the full extent of her pearly teeth.

"I have no silver or gold with me at present," replied Emily; "but if you will come to the Hall an hour hence, I will pay you handsomely. You know my uncle is always kind to your race."

"General Montgomery, the good and the brave?" said an aged man coming forward; "ay! that he always was, Lady, and all my

race shall bless all his race.—Not a sheaf of his corn or a fowl in his roost was ever the worse for Corrie Lovel—nor ever shall he. We are poor and we are wanderers, but we know when to stay our hand, and when to let it drive. Go, Lady, go in peace, and Lushee shall come after you and claim your bounty."

"Rose, Rose!" called Lady Emily, "let us be gone—I am late." But Rose's senses were so absorbed in listening to the fortune that was predicted to her, that she could not for some time understand Lady Emily's repeated commands—her eyes were distended beyond their usual size, her cheeks dyed crimson, and her mouth, half apart, seemed to catch the words of the men, who were busily whispering to her. Lady Emily looked distressed. "Come, Rose! are you bewildered? Come with me quickly."

"Eleazer," said Corrie Lovel, "let the girl go directly—let her go, I command thee."

When Lady Emily and Rose had advanced some way out of sight of the gang, the former said—"I would have given the world that we had not been alone. Hitherto, I have considered these gipsies to be a harmless race, with nothing but their wandering and wayward life to object against them; but the countenances of some of these were terrific. Oh! I am truly thankful we are safe out of their hands."

"La! they be very civil gentry, my Lady, I'm sure! they told me such surprising things as I never heard in my life. Why, they know all about me and Ambrose!"

"And do you wonder at that, Rose? Does not all the village know that he has long wished to have you for his wife? This cunning tribe make it their business to inquire into the histories of every body, in and about the place where they sojourn; and if this were all, it were no great harm innocently to apply their knowledge to their calling, and to retail the information they thus gather up, with the addition of such imaginary circumstances as their subtlety and ingenious wit may supply; but to pretend to read the future, to tell seriously what is known to God *alone*, is *wicked*. God only foresees the future, you know—and how miserable *we* should be, if *we knew* it, the least reflection will show you: it is therefore weak and wrong to indulge in so idle a curiosity, and I am sorry that what I did, partly in fear, partly in joke, should have set you so bad an example."

"But it is very diverting, my Lady, to hear them gipsy folks talk; and who knows but they may tell true sometimes?"

Emily saw that Rose's wishes lent faith to all that had been said to her relative to her good fortune, and she thought it best not to press the matter farther; but quickened her footsteps to return to the Hall, with her spirits flurried by the unforeseen incidents which had disturbed her morning's walk.

As she reached the garden, she found how late it was; and, anticipating the gentle rebuke of her uncle for having missed prayers waited not to adjust her dress, but flew into the house, flushed with exercise, and all the glow of health blooming on her cheeks, to which her dishevelled ringlets added fresh graces, like the moss around a beautiful rose. She entered the breakfast-room. There, every person residing at the Hall, except Lady Frances, was assembled. General Montgomery, looking grave, said, "You were not at prayers this morning, my child; were you not well?"

"Oh, quite—*quite* well, dear uncle! and I am ashamed to have no good excuse to offer; but the truth is, the morning was so beautiful, and the hedges were so green and shining, with their patches of May-flower smelling so fragrantly!—and I went to gather some wild violets for you, dear uncle; and then we met some gipsies, for Rose was with me; and then we had our fortunes told—and then, in short, I forgot how the hours flew."

"I went out to gather violets for you," was the sweet part of this speech in General Montgomery's ears, and he pressed her to his heart, kissing her forehead, and saying, "Dearest, best!" Then turning to Miss Macalpine: "Make some fresh tea for Emily, if you please, Miss Macalpine. Lord Mowbray, be so obliging as to touch the bell. Bring some toast for Lady Emily. Here, my love, are some of the freshest eggs; I charged Fenton to send only those that were laid this morning—they will please even you."

At this moment Lady Frances entered: her cornette of the finest Brussels lace, her morning-robe of pale lavender silk, her little feet in her little slippers, fresh smiles called up to her vermeil-tinctured lips—the person and its decoration were alike faultless. She approached with a sliding step and an air of studied grace, to her uncle. "How have you passed the night?" said she. "Dear uncle, I must apologize for being so late, but I have had such a bad head-ache!" and, as she spoke, she poured some *eau de delices* upon her handkerchief and held it to her temples; then bowed gracefully round the table, and took, or rather sank into an easy chair.

"I trust you did not catch cold yesterday?" said the General affectionately. "Miss Macalpine, take care of our queen."

When the bustle of the breakfast arrangements had subsided, Lady Frances lifted her eyes lanquidly around; and then, as if for the first time she had discovered that her sister was present, she exclaimed, "Heavens! Emily, what a figure you are! You are not fit to appear—positively indelicate;—pray, go and arrange your toilette! Why, there's your collar all torn to pieces, and your bonnet swinging behind your neck like a Billingsgate-woman's—and your hair! it is quite *decrêpé*, hanging about like a Naiad's."

"Poor dear! do not teaze her," said the General; "she is fatigued."

"Really, my uncle is too indulgent!" (and that was true.)

General Montgomery did the reverse of what most other people do:—he constantly practised what he seldom preached. Rebuke, however gentle, was with him an effort; and to give the slightest pain to any person or thing, was of as rare occurrence, as it is for the generality of people to confer pleasure. "Let me cut you some of this French loaf;" and he busily cut the bread in delicate slices for Lady Emily; "but where are my violets?" seeing he had thrown them down. Lady Emily was at his feet in a moment, replacing them in his extended hands.

"Delicious!" he said, inhaling their fragrance: "who would be in London that can live in the country?" Lady Frances looked unutterable things, and Lady Emily replied, "Both are best, dear uncle. I love the country, but town too has its charms."

"Very true, my love, so it has, and particularly for the young and the lovely. What say you, Lord Mowbray?"

"I am quite of Lady Emily's opinion:—both are best." And the business of the moment went on.

"Alpinia," cried Lady Emily, addressing Miss Macalpine thus fancifully, as she was wont to do those with whom she lived in kindly familiarity—"Alpinia, you would have been so delighted if you had been with me this morning. I shall positively take you by storm to-morrow morning, to Lover's Lane: it is the very place where you might sit and study Madame de Sevigné's Letters, and Fenelon, and Sherlock, and all your favourites. Nay, we might act the gipsy-scenes in Guy Mannering, if you liked. Then, there are whole hives of bees; you might fancy yourself on Hymettus; and the banks are so green, and the furze so brightly yellow with its musky sweet! quite like one of your own Scotch knowes."

"Ah!" replied Miss Macalpine, rubbing her forefinger, and sighing at the *recollection* of Scotland, "there's mony a fair scene

doubtless, in England; but the mountains and the streams of my own dear land, whaur will you see the like?" and she rubbed her finger the harder.

Lady Frances shrugged her shoulders. "And the savages, Miss Macalpine, who animate these fair landscapes?"

"Are just the very grace and ornament of their country; the bravest and the truest! It suits you ill, Lady Frances, that can boast some Scotch blood in your veins, to be decrying them. I would not change my own sweet, wild hills, and lone heaths, and misty mountains, for all the

'Groves o' sweet myrtle that foreign lands reckon.'"

"Very right," rejoined General Montgomery, "very right, Alpinia! never let them laugh you out of that. I could back your sentiment with many a good ancient proverb. There is no country like our own country, wherever that may be; and it would be well if every body thought so. That is the true way to maintain all things in their proper places."

"Mind ye that, Lady Frances?" said Miss Macalpine, turning to her: "I remember you Lady Frances, a fine natural wean, when you were no higher than this, but you are not the same: e'en now your fine acquaintance in London, and your twa years in Paris, ha' na improved you."

"What Alpinia!" rejoined Lady Emily, taking up the discourse, which she was afraid was assuming too serious a tone, "have I not heard you say, yourself, that you should like to spend a few weeks at *Fount and Blow* and study the French fashions; the *coiffoors* of Monsieur Plaisir, and the *costoomes de bawl* of Mamselle Catin, and the *chapeaux*, and the *conrettes de dantelle* of the inimitable Madame Herbot?" imitating Miss Macalpine's pronunciation of the language.

There was something in the straightforward *brusque* simplicity of Miss Macalpine, which completely put to the rout Lady Frances's airs and affectations; and when she had excited, by some flippant or insolent speech, the honest indignation of her old friend, she had no resource but in silent sullenness, or the good-natured interference of her sister. On the present occasion, Lady Emily formed a diversion in her favour, by calling down upon herself the good-humoured wrath of Miss Macalpine; and after some sprightly conversation on French fashions, they rose from breakfast. The Ge-

neral addressed his friend, Sir Richard Townley, on the subject of extracting thistles and planting lucern; Lord Mowbray gave his arm to Lady Frances, and the whole party dispersed to their several avocations and amusements.

CHAPTER IV.

O rus, quando te aspiciam! HORACE.

Blest rural scenes! when may I hope to see
Your sweet abodes, for ever dear to me;
Where studious now I turn the classic page,
Seeking instruction from each distant age;
Or now indulging vacant, listless hours,
I court soft slumbers in delicious bowers,
And in forgetfulness delicious drown
The cares of anxious life and of the busy town?
LATE D—— OF A——.

ONE morning, when every object of interest in the neighbourhood seemed to have been exhausted in entertaining their visitor, and no other presented itself, General Montgomery addressed his niece, saying—"Dearest Emily, has Lord Mowbray yet seen my favourite bower?"

Lord Mowbray bowed, and acknowledged that the bower was one of the beauties of Montgomery Hall not yet revealed to him. "Well then," said the General, "your Lordship must see it.—So, Emily, haste! equip yourself for the garden.—Who else will be of our party? Frances, my queen, you will go too? Miss Macalpine, Pennington and the rest."

General Montgomery had an unfeigned and universal pleasure in every thing connected with the country; his passion was confined to no one particular enjoyment of the numberless sources which a country life opens of happiness and interest; to no one individual object, either of farming, planting, or gardening: of all he was susceptible, to all he alternately directed his attention: thus building up for himself, in these rational pursuits, an endless fabric of happiness and lasting enjoyment. His bower, however, was a favourite *par excellence;* and, perhaps, the more so from the pleasure and trouble Lady Emily took in its decoration and embellishment. Thither he now led the way, with the eagerness of one who is *conscious of* paying homage to the taste and fondness

of a being dearly cherished by him; while he was at the same moment indulging his own predilection for the favoured spot.

"Your house, I have observed, General," said Lord Mowbray, as he turned round and looked at it from the end of the terrace, "is of the Elizabethan style of archictecture. How well that style is adapted to our climate, and how connected with our history as a people! It is to be lamented that so characteristic a taste—a taste, one may say, so perfectly of English growth, and so interwoven with one of our proudest eras, should now-a-days be abandoned for imperfect, garbled imitations of classical beauties; which, at the same time that they are alien to our feelings, are inapplicable both to our skies and our habits, and can never be employed (in our domestic buildings at least) without losing one chief merit of all architecture, *consistency*. For when we inquire how, in this exotic style of building, our comforts—our true English comforts, are provided for, we find its adoption destroys them all! The bay-windows, the oaken wainscoted halls, the large fireplaces of our old English mansions, which bring back to our remembrance all the comforts and all the virtues of home-bred growth, are abandoned for the open galleries and porticos (that lose all use for want of the sun, and all effect for want of light and shade), and for the large, stuccoed, *scagliogled* and comfortless apartments of the South, which freeze us out of our enjoyments, while they make us shrink at the same time into the insignificance of copyists. I will allow," continued Lord Mowbray, as he stood on the stone steps descending from the terrace to the garden—"I will allow that, in these decorations, we may take a lesson from other countries; and our forefathers did so in adopting the terraced gardens of Italy and France; but then, it is only because the principle of common sense allows it. It is fitting that a mansion should be surrounded with something like ornament; and that we should not step out of a drawing-room exactly into a turnip-field, or long grass, or straggling wood. A formal parterre, fine vases, and statues lining the long alleys; these evergreen hedges, sheltering the flowers alike from the keen blast and from the sun; these fountains, playing on each side of this decorated scene; and the sun-dial in the midst, are all in unison with the vicinity of man's habitation; and though perhaps roses bloom not here, as Virgil tells us they did in the Ausonian land, twice in every year; yet, when they do put forth, and the sun shines upon us, the whole is harmonious and in keeping."

Thus did Lord Mowbray descant on the subject of taste—a sub-

ect always dear to him, and on which he loved to dwell: if only that it brought back to his recollection the countries where he had first imbibed its truest principles. Unlike the generality of virtuosos, however, his enthusiasm for the productions of a peculiar people, or a particular style of art, did not blind him to excellence when found elsewhere: and as he had studied the question of taste *par principe*, so he was enabled to apply the instruction with a consideration of the monuments of ancient art afforded to practical purposes, even under totally different circumstances.

General Montgomery listened with delight to sentiments so closely in affinity with his own; and his concurrence with all that Lord Mowbray advanced, appeared in the deep and uninterrupted attention which he paid to him while speaking, and by the smile of delight which lit up and animated his features.

The only impatient listener on the occasion was Lady Frances, who had reckoned upon nothing to compensate her for the ennui of the walk but Lord Mowbray's attentions. These she had hitherto succeeded in engrossing entirely to herself; and mortified now at his seeming indifference, and at the interest which he displayed on other subjects, she resolved to attract his notice by attacking the opinions advanced by him, though ignorant of, as well as indifferent to the subject. Taking up the question, therefore, as a means of drawing his attention, but her pique at the same time not allowing her to address Lord Mowbray personally, she passed her arm through the General's, and leaning languidly towards him, said—"Dear uncle, don't be affronted; but do you know, that if I could do what I liked, this terrace should be levelled into a fine green slope; I would have tufts of trees here and there; the river should be blocked up, to form a large sheet of water at the bottom of the valley, and—"

"That is, Frances," interrupted the General, "these sunny, terraced banks, and this court of Flora, mutually enhancing each other's beauties; that stream, which murmurs so harmoniously as it ripples and dashes over its stony bed, should be turned into the dullest of all dull things—a large, green English park, with an oval pond in the midst, conveniently placed to reflect back the surrounding insipidity. That is what you mean, Frances, is it not?"

"Certainly, dearest uncle, a park in itself is a dull, monotonous thing; but, you know, if these high screens of evergreens were removed, we should obtain a view of the high road, and the carriages passing. And *then, if the old* beech avenue was cut down, and the

road wound round and round, instead of going straight as a dart up to the Hall, the effect would be charming; and the visitors, as they approached, would be so agreeably surprised!"

"At being taken miles out of their way in reaching their destination, Frances, I suppose?" said the General.

"No; but, dear uncle, I am serious; it *would* be a great improvement. I have been reading a book upon landscape gardening lately, and, I assure you, I am quite *au fait* at these things. And in getting rid of those old trees, with their bare roots, we should get rid of all these cawing rooks, that really make noise enough, morning and evening, to deafen one's ears and depress one's spirits—mine, at least."

General Montgomery heard the proposed improvements patiently enough, considering how unwelcome they were to him even in idea; but to have actually seen the minutest alteration, would have put all his gentle philosophy to its severest test. In age, the love of natural and inanimate objects becomes stronger than in youth; they are, perhaps, the last remaining associates of earlier days of happiness, when the companions we have loved are no more, or are divided from us by absence, or, what is worse, are changed; or have proved, it may be, unworthy of the affections lavished upon them: but the trees and shrubs and flowers planted by us, thrive, and repay our care; cheer us with their ever renovating beauty, and impart, as it were, their youthful vigour to our declining feebleness. The very chair we have been accustomed to, receives us still with unchanging kindness; *le fauteuil qui nous tend les bras*, assumes the character of friend whom we have invested with all our feeling and thoughts, and who promises to us an assurance of sympathy and comfort that will be unaltered to the end.

These were so truly General Montgomery's feelings, that he may well be supposed to have writhed under Lady Frances's enumeration of improvements; and had his gentle spirit ever suffered him to utter a severe reproof, it would have been called forth in the present instance; but he preserved silence, signifying his dissent, as she ceased speaking, only by a mournful shake of the head and a look of regret.

A pause ensued, for Lord Mowbray seemed unwilling to accept the challenge covertly offered by Lady Frances, while addressing her uncle; and Lady Frances, on her part, disappointed in the object she had proposed by speaking at all, appeared reluctant to join *farther in the conversation*. The good General was unwilling to

allow the question at issue, however, to end thus abruptly; and, ever anxious to think in unison with those he loved, sought some point to concede. "I think you are right, Frances, about those rooks," he said, interrupting the silence; "but what can I do? would you have them shot?"

"Shot!" exclaimed Lady Emily eagerly; "oh, no; I beseech you, dear uncle, do not have any of them shot: only drive them away."

"Why, Emily, you remind me of a gentle friend of mine, whose premises were overrun by rats, but who could never be persuaded to destroy them; till at last, wearied with the complaints of servants, and finding that the plea which he always urged, of there being room enough in the world both for himself and the rats too, availed nothing, he consented to a removal of the obnoxious visitors. And this was at length accomplished by carrying many sacks-full to a neighbouring common; where, released from their temporary captivity, they were left to live out their little day of life unmolested, at least by him. "It is a pity," said the General, as he concluded, "that this gentleness of soul will not bear reasoning upon, for one cannot choose but love it."

"Love it! yes," cried Lady Emily; "but are there not some things, dearest uncle, which it would be wicked to reason upon, and as wicked not to love? and surely this gentleness you speak of is one of them."

General Montgomery gave one of his fondest looks of admiration and affection, as he pressed Lady Emily's hand in his own, saying, "*Et sa déraison, fussiez-vous Caton, auroit l'art de vous plaire.*"

"Well!" said Lady Frances scornfully, "we seem to have got tolerably far from the first question; we began with a disquisition on taste, and are ending with a disquisition on rats:" and, forgetting the reserve she had assumed towards Lord Mowbray, she asked—"Pray, my Lord, what is your opinion of modern improvements? for I think we should end one subject before we begin another. Emily and her rats can wait. What do you think?"

"Think!" said Lord Mowbray, half starting from a reverie into which he had fallen,—"about what?"

"About taste."

"What a question! Do you expect me to discuss, in a word, a subject which has filled volumes? I know what pleases myself—that is, I believe I do—sometimes."

"Well," interrupted the General, "before you go farther, Frances, in questioning Lord Mowbray on this subject, I think you are your-

self bound to give us a definition of taste. I have my suspicions, however, that you confound it with fashion, though they are two very different things; and therefore, before you enter the lists, I will read you a little disquisition on these two words. It pleased me extremely yesterday, when I met with it in one of the Magazines; I have it in my pocket."

The party having reached the General's bower, and having arranged themselves beneath its shady roof, he read to them as follows:—

FASHION AND TASTE.

Fashion and Taste were sisters, but so very opposite in their characters, appearance, and manners, that few persons could suppose them to bear any relationship to each other.

Fashion was light, airy, agreeable; but changeable as the cameleon. Taste was grave, gentle, unobtrusive, and required to be courted and drawn out in order to be understood and appreciated. Fashion swayed like a capricious tyrant where she obtained rule. Taste maintained her power by gentle but convincing arguments; the more she was known the better she was loved; invariable in her modes and expressions, she had recourse to no extraneous allurements from novelty, but held on the even tenour of her way: from the most sublime to the most humble topic which came under her cognizance, she reasoned alike with a noble simplicity, and formed her own judgment without arrogance, yet without any subserviency to the trivial opinions of the day.

It is strange, however, to say, that notwithstanding the acknowledged and established precedence of Taste—(for nobody would be supposed incapable of paying her all manner of deference);—notwithstanding this, when the two sisters, Taste and Fashion, appeared in public, Fashion would almost always take the lead, while Taste was frequently seen to be abstracted from the busy scene, musing alone, in quiet, graceful contemplation, on the passing throng. At times, Fashion, struck by the native charm which played around her sister, would fly to her arms, and walk by her side. When this was the case, she caught, in despite of herself, a reflection from the graces of Taste, and for the moment became irresistible; but, as it was merely caprice which induced her to seek this companionship, so it ended as quickly on her part in wearisomeness and disgust; and from her sickly appetite, which was ever in quest of change, she would hasten indiscriminately from better to worse in pursuit of novelty, sacrificing every thing to the gratification of that, her ruling passion. Taste, on the contrary, with a few judicious exceptions, generally leaned to whatever had been sanctioned by Time; not that she was a servile imitator, even of the ancients, but that she defended her deference to them upon their being followers of Nature, and because concurrent opinion and the judgment of mankind had strengthened and confirmed their choice.

Fashion, on her part, laughed openly, or sneered maliciously, at every thing which was more than nine days old; and though sometimes, as if in mockery, she approached the shrine of antiquity, she never did so without putting on the mask of sister Taste—a device which failed in deceiving long, and which terminated in

variably in her own exposure. Nevertheless, Fashion succeeded, at last, in putting her sister in the background, and gained complete rule over the multitude.

Taste, however, showed no ill-temper at this defeat; neither did she envy her sister's success: she did not forsake the world altogether in disgust, because she was frequently eclipsed in it; neither did she lose her own identity by a too constant admixture therewith, but would occasionally retire to scenes of perfect seclusion, to cultivate and indulge her own pure and noble pursuits.

In fine, with that true spirit of gentleness and humility which particularly characterises her, she never quarrelled with Fashion, though her sister was constantly at variance with her; but was ever ready to receive and to accompany her, whenever her countenance and support were solicited.

This, however, occurred so very rarely, and the union proved always of such brief duration, that, finally, Taste could place no trust in its stability; and those only who had the courage to depart from the multitude and adhere to her side, uninfluenced by her versatile sister, ever expected or ever were peculiarly distinguished by her.

"I hate," said Lady Frances peevishly, "to be cheated into any thing; and those tiresome allegories always appear to me to be such a stale contrivance: stories are quite different stories, according as they are told. Now, my dear Sir, if I were to relate an apologue upon the subject which you have just given us, I would relate it thus:—'Fashion was a young, gay, delightful creature, who never frowned or prosed; and her sister, *Good* Taste, loved her so much, that they were inseparable——' In short (only it is too much trouble), I could carry on the whole history, if I chose it, in the contrary strain; and end by drawing an inference the very reverse of that which is made by your book."

General Montgomery smiled at the ingenuity of his unpersuadable niece; and then turning to his own loved Emily, he said, "You, best and dearest, will enter into my delight at this little fable, which I conceive to be the fairest possible excuse for, or, rather I should say, the strongest argument in favour of my sun-dial, my fountains, and my yew-hedges. Whatever modern innovation may suggest, there is certainly no true taste in converting the immediate vicinity of a gentleman's house into a bare jejune field, with a few clumps of trees sprinkled over it, and no reason either. Our climate always demands shelter, sometimes shade, and you have both in these noble evergreen screens which protect my flowers alternately from wind and heat, while my fountains glitter in the beams of the sun, and show like liquid diamonds; or, when the softer splendour of the moon rests upon them, they form a silvery sheet of falling light. Then my sun-dial, in the midst of my parterre, that tells me what

See the tired oxen, with a lagging pace;
The plough inverted, and the sheep demure;
The farming menials too, a numerous race,
At night returning, taste of rest secure.

What real joy this tranquil life to lead!
Of worldly cares to take a last farewell!
To rural scenes, till number'd with the dead,
I fly; and there for evermore shall dwell."

"Now, Emily," said General Montgomery, "you have inflicted enough on Lord Mowbray; spare his Lordship the necessity of any flattering encomiums on my doggerel, and lead the way home."

"Indeed, General, my praise would be most sincere, did you not forbid its utterance; and its sincerity is, I fear, its only value: although I should grow less diffident of my judgment, had I always the happiness, as in the present instance, of agreeing with Lady Emily."

Lord Mowbray, who meant nothing beyond politeness to the General and his niece on the subject of his verses, perceived that his last remark had been interpreted by Lady Frances to refer to the former conversation on the terrace; and now feeling herself not only neglected, but pointedly reproved by Lord Mowbray, she with difficulty concealed the mortification she experienced.

A servant from the Hall met the party on their return with a note, which Lady Emily bounded forward to receive; for when is not a note an event in the country? To the younger party it conjures up fairy visions of balls and beaux; new dresses, new admirers, and all the long, delightful *et cetera* of a fête. By the elder branches of the family, perhaps, this harbinger of coming events is looked upon with doubt; and the ball, with all its contingent fatigues, should it be a ball, is to them a matter of apprehension rather than of hope.

It was not thus, however, to General Montgomery. He lived but for his nieces; and their enjoyment was always sure to be his, come in what shape it might. He smiled at his favourite Emily's anxiety to know the contents of the little perfumed *billet doux* which she placed in his hands; and said, as he broke the seal, "What a pity it is that the ardour of youth remains not always with us, and that we lose that keen sense of innocent hope and fears as we grow older! But if it be true that hope oft dies ere youth has passed its prime, and that experience takes the lead of age, withering the few flowers which grow in life's downward path, it is wise *also*—" but the good General stopped and suppressed a sigh. "Well,

my Emily, what say you? Shall I wait till we reach home, or read the contents of my note here?"

"Oh! dear uncle, you know it requires an answer: the servant waits."

The note was opened, and its contents soon made known. "Well, Frances! Emily!" said the General, "we are invited to the Fitzhammonds', to their christening. Let me see, when is it to be?—Friday week."

"Oh, I hope you will go, dearest uncle!" said Lady Emily, taking his arm coaxingly—"I hope you will, for there is to be a ball in the evening."

"A ball!" rejoined the General; "why, you seem to know it all beforehand."

"Oh, yes! my maid, Watson, says it is to be the finest thing that ever was seen."

"As all balls are in their turn, I believe," observed Lord Mowbray, smiling.

"Oh, fie!" said Lady Emily, holding up her finger; "I fear you are not fond of dancing; at least, not as I am fond of it,—for dancing sake."

"As for me," said Lady Frances, "I really feel no anxiety to make my appearance at such a cake and caudle affair. I suppose, all the plebeians of the town are invited. The apothecary, the attorney, and all the other genteel vulgar. Mercy! It is alarming to one's nerves to think of such an assemblage! And as to Mrs. Fitzhammond's pale, vacant face, that will be no amusement to me; and then all the strange melange, of what she calls *people of talent*, whom she pays to flatter her,—Heaven protect me from such a set."

"But there will be a ball, and somebody must be there to dance," said Lady Emily.

"Oh, yes!—what do you think of Mr. Kimbolton? who prances through a quadrille as if he had sworn the destruction of one's trimming; or Mr. Higglesworth? who says, 'Yes, Ma'am,' and 'If you please, my Lady;' or Sir John Marsden? who has a regular catechism at his fingers-end for all the pauses in the figure: 'How do you do? how is your uncle? where is your cousin? how is your aunt? how is Lady A——? Mrs. B——? Miss C——?' Ah! Heaven defend me from a country ball!"

"Frances," rejoined the General, with something more of asperity in the tone of his voice than was usual, "there are many kinds of

excellence in the world, and many sorts of virtues. I hold charity to be the chief among the latter: and if Mrs. Fitzhammond's pursuits and manners, and her style of company, are not exactly to your taste; if they are not excellences in your eyes; remember, she possesses many good sterling qualities, which, if they were more universally and better appreciated, the world would be better than it is. She is a good wife, a fond mother, a friend to the poor; and, as they tell me, very well informed, and capable of valuing the talents of those persons whom the ample fortune of her husband enables her to bring around her. So you see, my dear Frances, I can make as different a story of the subject of Mrs. Fitzhammond as you would have done of my allegory; and now then that we are even, dearest, we will go, and I am sure you will wear your brightest smiles."

"Oh! thank you, dear, dear uncle!" said Lady Emily.

"I hope your Lordship will not refuse?" said the General.

"By no means!" replied Lord Mowbray, as he bowed assent to the General's wishes.

In the meanwhile, the party continued their way to the Hall; and Lady Emily, in all the gaiety of youthful spirits, kept dancing on before her uncle, as he slowly paced the terrace. "Emily," said General Montgomery, "the very idea of this ball has made you quite wild; though, I really believe, you would dance with a post, if it could move, rather than not dance at all; and it is quite right and natural, dearest! I never hear good music but my dancing-days come back to me in their original joyousness; and I should certainly dance forthwith, were it not that it would suit ill with an old General to be twirling about like a tetotum. Eh! Pennington, you are younger than I am; why do you not join Emily?"

By this time they had reached the library-window. The General entered to write his answer to the invitation, and the different parties paired off, Lady Frances being the only one among them who appeared dissatisfied with the arrangements and amusements of the morning.

CHAPTER V.

Yet scarcely can I throw a smile on things
So painful, but that, Time his comfort brings,
Or rather throws oblivion on the mind;
For we are more forgetful than resigned.
CRABBE'S *Tales of the Hall.*

THE party at the Hall had sought (throughout the day) their own peculiar amusements, and, in the liberty which was professedly allowed to its inmates, each invidual had planned some little project of gratification, independent of the rest of the world around them. The General had been occupied with his agents, whose smiling faces and profuse compliments and allusions to their employer's fortune, as they sat down to the hospitable board, evinced how well they were satisfied with the prospect of his affairs. They were, in consequence, in a state of more than usual obsequiousness and garrulity through the dinner; but how difficult is it for vulgar and grovelling spirits to conceal the cause of their self-gratulation! they are betrayed even by the effort, amiable enough in itself, of overstrained anxiety to please!

The next to them in self-complacency (yet how different the cause from whence that complacency sprung!) was Lady Emily. Her morning had been spent in visits to the poor around the General's estate, to *all* of whom she was a friend; to many a mother and benefactress. Rose Delvin, who was at once her almoner and companion in these progresses of charity, had carried with her various comforts for the sick and infirm; clothes and food for the more indigent; and, above all, she herself dispensed those gentle words of kindly interest, which cheer the sick and the suffering, and are in every one's power to bestow in a degree, although it is given to few to join the angel's manner with the angel's mind.

Miss Macalpine appeared in the circle the same as usual; her daily routine of reading and writing, intermingled with certain tunes on the violin, which she had been practising for thirty years (her adoption of this instrument was occasioned by a compliment which had been paid to her when young:—she had been told, either in est or earnest, that she resembled the angel which, in one of Rafaelle's famous *pictures, is* represented playing on a violin); and

this singular amusement, with the never-failing resource of Madame de Sevigné, made her day glide by to her own satisfaction; nor were her days always confined to self-amusement; she frequently joined Lady Emily in her charitable rounds, and assisted, with her means, the schemes which the latter was constantly planning for the benefit of the distressed.

Lord Mowbray, Colonel Pennington, and Sir Richard Townley, all wore the smile of self-complacency; we will not say all from the same source; and Lady Frances was still the only one who appeared dissatisfied. There had been no new visitors at the hall. Lord Mowbray did not pay her the homage she required, or show himself inclined to attend her in the promenades she had proposed to the conservatories or flower-gardens. In short

"Where none are beaux, 'tis vain to be a belle."

And this alone was sufficient to stamp that sullen expression on her countenance which deforms Beauty's self; while the contrast of the joyous contentment which shone out on her sister Lady Emily's features, lent them that ineffable power to charm which diffused itself into the very hearts of all beholders.

The dinner past, the rubber played, the music performed—though (owing to Lady Frances, or to the instrument being out of tune) not so brilliantly as was its wont; one by one, the company dropped off to their respective apartments, and Colonel Pennington found himself alone with Lord Mowbray. Lord Mowbray commenced the conversation by asking who that odd old woman, Miss Macalpine, was. "Imagine to yourself, my dear Pennington—I met her to-day by accident in the garden, and she volunteered me her good advice, telling me that I ought to direct my energies and my capacities (I never knew I had any) to some useful end. Her singleness of mind, mingled as it is with much shrewd sense, and rendered more amusing by her national accent, makes her a very diverting person; but why she should take upon herself to lecture me, I cannot divine!"

"Ay, poor soul!" replied the Colonel, shaking his head; "doubtless she feels an interest in you, though it must be of a painful kind. She was well acquainted with your kinsman, the late Lord, to her misfortune; and she still loves every thing and every person connected with him."

"How so? was there any flirtation between them in those days *before the flood*?"

"Humph!" groaned the Colonel. "Flirtation is one word for certain conduct in a man, but you must pardon me if I call it by another. It is altogether a sad story, and I would rather forget it." So saying, he gulped down his glass of wine and water which stood on the supper tray.

"Come," cried Lord Mowbray, with more eagerness than he was wont to display, "let me know how they carried on these affairs thus long ago? Pretty much as they do now, I suppose? So my coz made a fool of Miss Marian Macalpine?"

"He made a villain of himself!" replied the Colonel, in his loudest tone, and striking the table with his clenched fist. "Yes, I will tell you the story: for it may make you sensible that the false acceptation of a word may lead to very fatal consequences; and that though honour has practically in the world a wide difference in its meaning, as applied to the conduct of men towards women, or in respect to each other,—nevertheless that it does not change its original sense or alter its nature, however much fashionable vice may disguise the one or subvert the other."

"I am all attention;" replied Lord Mowbray, settling himself in the midst of a large sofa, surrounded by cushions;—"pray, begin."

Colonel Pennington hemmed loudly, and spoke as follows:—"The late Lord Mowbray became very early in life master of himself, as the phrase goes—that is to say, master of every means most likely to render a man the slave of himself as well as of others. He was brought up to no profession: and had no determinate pursuit—the greatest mistake that any one can make in the regulation of early habits; and from the erring fondness of a weak mother, he was left to the management of servants, and learnt nothing farther but what they called to be manly, which meant to bring down a bird, hunt a badger, or earth a fox-hole. One day, his mother came into the room where an unfortunate governess (for he had a governess till he was ten years old) was attempting to teach him to write, and he was kicking and striving to overturn the table on her legs: 'Why do you torment the boy so? if he does not like to do his lesson now, he will do it another time; and if he never does it, it does not much signify, he will always have somebody to do it for him!'

"This one anedocte will develop to you the whole course of his early education. It chanced, however, that nature had given him talents of a higher order; and although the conversation and sports of Will *the huntsman* and Dick the gamekeeper sufficed to

his boyish days, he felt their inadequacy to his ripening years, and became disgusted with such communion—a disgust much increased by his forming an acquaintance with a very superior woman a few years older than himself, but one whose influence and natural good sense opposed itself to these degrading pursuits, and contributed to save him from the fatal love of low and illiterate society; a habit which, once formed, fails not to lower and debase the man; and to encourage in him the growth of all the worst and most sensual propensities of his nature. I have heard people say, when speaking of characters, who have fallen into this error,—'Oh! he's a fine fellow that! he is not proud: he speaks to Jem this, and Jack t'other, just as free as if they were of his own class!' but such persons are much deceived in attributing to these men the qualities which they think constitute '*a good fellow!*' I have never seen such a domineering spirit in any class of society as is to be found in those whose associates are beneath them in rank, intellect, and education: men who habitually live with low company, enjoy only the companionship of such as they can with impunity bully, or turn into ridicule. I have myself known some individuals, the most exalted in station, and most distinguished by the gifts of nature, who have become a prey to this fatal love of mixing in the society of the low and vicious part of mankind, and I have invariably found in them the same tyrannical and overbearing disposition. From this incurable habit, my friend, your kinsman, was however saved in time, and chiefly by the intimacy he formed with Miss Marian Macalpine!

"What!" said Lord Mowbray, "this identical Miss Macalpine?"

"The very same!" rejoined Colonel Pennington.—"When the late Lord Mowbray was about sixteen years old, his mother retired to her native Scotland: she was one of those tranquil characters, apparently, which passed for gentleness personified to all who did not know her intimately; but to those who did, she appeared in her true colours: very meek and very positive; foolish and obstinate withal as any mule. Without being servile, Marian Macalpine was an indispensable person in her establishment; one whose presence was never obtrusively felt, but whose absence was acknowledged as a blank by every creature in the family; the proverb of 'a favourite has no friend,' was reversed in her favour: she *was* a favourite, and every one was *her friend*. Were any sick, Marian attended them night and day; were any domestic arrangements to be made, nobody executed them so well or so willingly as Marian. In the midst of all

this circumstantial activity in every day concerns, there were hours when this girl stole time to improve herself by reading, and cultivating many little accomplishments; and she afterwards turned these acquirements to profit. Her enthusiasm for every thing that was noble, roused the young Lord Mowbray's dormant qualities; and oftentimes, as we roved about on the neighbouring loch, for I was a frequent inmate there, she would take an opportunity of speaking of the military glory of our country, or the fame of its patriots and statesmen, till we both kindled at her words; and to these early impressions may be attributed the different walks which we afterwards pursued in life."

"You interest me greatly," said Lord Mowbray; "pray, go on."

"The career which I chose," continued the Colonel, "led me sooner away from home: but as I occasionally returned to Heatherden, and spent some months at a time there, I had opportunities of seeing and appreciating the sterling good qualities, and of admiring the sweet and lovely person of Marian, till my affections were engaged deeper than I believed them to be: then, and then only, were my eyes completely opened; and, long before it was known to themselves, I knew that Marian's life was bound up in Lord Mowbray's: I foresaw many obstacles to their union; but I was also aware that, provided he remained steady to his purpose, nothing could ultimately prevent her becoming his wife: and this thought subdued my pretensions, and left only an affection like a brother's love, which has never changed, poor soul! it has been, I believe often her only consolation!"

Here the good Colonel paused, and had recourse to a replenishment of his glass before he proceeded; during which, Lord Mowbray instinctively gave utterance to his astonishment at the recital he had been listening to. "Strange, passing strange," he said, "that I should have met the person here, and at this particular time! Did you know that she was an inmate at the Hall?"

The Colonel, too intent on his own thoughts, without replying directly to these questions, went on: "The Minister's manse (Marian's paternal home) was nearly a mile from Heatherden; Lord Mowbray always accompanied her to and from her father's, and frequently I was one of the party. Those were happy hours; we were innocent and gay creatures: but while I please myself with lingering thus on my story, perhaps I weary you."

"Not at all," replied Lord Mowbray, with greater earnestness than his manner usually expressed; endeavouring (for people some-

times will try to conceal their better feelings) to hide, under an apparent lightness of manner the deep interest he took in the story; —"not at all, I assure you; it is very amusing to know how people managed their Flirtations forty years ago."

"Humph!" ejaculated the Colonel, between a sigh and a groan: and then continued—"At length, the time came when Lord Mowbray's guardians thought it necessary to send him on his travels. I was surprised to observe that he seemed overjoyed at the idea of leaving home; and immediately I apprehended the worst for Marian's happiness. Marian, however, never averted to herself in my presence; and I knew from his own lips afterwards, that she never did so to Lord Mowbray; which failed not to increase my respect and admiration for her. On the contrary, she talked only of the opportunities which would be afforded to him of making friends, and urged him to be diligent in preparing himself for the new scenes in which he was about to enter. 'Should you not follow up this present intention of entering on the diplomacy,' she would say, 'at ony rate you will become acquainted with the talented and illustrious personages o' your day; and your ain parts and virtues will be drawn out, and mak' you endeavour to be usefu' to yoursel' and ithers.' The dialect which Marian spoke—it was *then*, as now, broad Scotch—lessened not the pith and force of her strong natural sense, and the uprightness of her warm and affectionate heart. It might sometimes occasion a laugh, but on reflection it contained too much matter to be contemned; and, for my own part, I thought it carried a natural grace with it, which had greater power than the smooth monotony of more polished phrase. Such and such only were the sentiments of Marian. She lived but in the idea and hope of his aggrandizement, and his success; and her disregard of all selfish considerations threw a noble lustre over her character, deserving a better fate than that which she has met."

The Colonel here paused for a moment or two, with his countenance fixed in an expression of deep thought. He then resumed: —"I accompanied your kinsman to the Continent. As soon as we arrived there, he confessed to me that he felt relieved in being absent from Heatherden; it freed him from a chain, he said, from which he knew not how to liberate himself. How Marian felt, some of her own letters will best declare; they were committed to me by Lord Mowbray, to be returned to Miss Macalpine; but the truth is, I had never heart to do this, knowing that wounds still unhealed would be opened afresh by my doing so: and now I should almost wish to

read them to you. In most cases, this would be a breach of confidence; but years are gone by, and, in truth, the letters do honour to the writer; they may take effect upon you too. But it is growing late, and we had better separate now. Some other day," he added, "I will resume my story; to-morrow, perhaps, should nothing intervene; for the papers I allude to are in Montgomery's charge, to whom I consigned them, since Miss Macalpine has become a resident in his house, to be delivered to her in the event of my death, if I die before her; and if not, to be destroyed. To destroy them myself, I felt, was impossible; for they are too interesting, and do too much justice to an injured woman, to suffer me to consign them to oblivion; besides, I am now doubly glad they are in existence, since I have it in my power to communicate their contents to yourself—a circumstance which, on all accounts, is satisfactory to me."

"Pray, let me see them," said Lord Mowbray with great earnestness; "I beg you will.—Love letters forty years old must be interesting; Flirtations of the last century, a pleasant sort of old-fashioned comedy."

"A tragedy, say rather, and you will speak more truly."

"Perhaps so," answered Lord Mowbray with a stifled sigh; and he passed his hand over his brow to hide the feeling which contracted it for a moment.

The Colonel did not answer, but, lighting his taper, bade him good-night. "We shall be alone again to-morrow evening," he said, coming back into the room.

"I hope so," rejoined Lord Mowbray; and they separated for the night.

The next evening, however, and the next, passed away; and still Colonel Pennington did not resume the subject; and Lord Mowbray, on whom the recital of Miss Macalpine's story had made a peculiarly strong impression, thought that the promise of affording him a perusal of the letters connected with it had been forgotten, or on a maturer consideration withheld, and from motives of delicacy, therefore, he refrained from any observation upon the subject. On the third subsequent night, he again found himself alone with Colonel Pennington; who, starting from his chair, as he perceived they were once more by themselves, said abruptly, "Mowbray, are you inclined to listen to any of the letters I alluded to a few evenings ago?"

"Oh, certainly!" replied Lord Mowbray; and then rallying again

all the mingled interest and curiosity he had felt on the subject, added,—"Oh, by all means; it is just the kind of stimulus I require at this moment: pray, let me see them; that is, if you will intrust them to me for perusal."

"No, not for perusal. I cannot intrust them to any one for perusal," said Colonel Pennington, half audibly to himself; and then added "I will *read* them to you, Mowbray."

So saying he left the room, and soon returned with a curious casket of walnut wood, covered with brass ornaments, to the handle of which was affixed, in a sealed paper, the key of the box. The Colonel tore away the envelope containing the key, and applied it to the lock, which was one of old and foreign manufacture, and at length opened the casket; from whence, breathing high, he took one or two packets of letters; then paused, as if summoning up resolution, and was about to begin reading aloud; but laying the papers down again, he looked around—"Every body is gone to bed, I think; I should not like that we were overheard!" and he rose from his seat to examine if the doors were carefully closed.

"Leave that window open, at least," said Lord Mowbray; "for they have made so great a fire, that I shall be stifled before I have time to be sentimental."

"No one can listen there, for it is too high from the ground," rejoined the Colonel; "and so now attend. I begin with Marian's first letter to Lord Mowbray, after his leaving her:" and drawing a deep breath, he commenced reading:—

"The house has been unco waelike since you gaed awa'. It is now a week syne, for yesterday was the Lord's Day; and in the kirk my father prayed for the noble family connected with thae bounds, and the safe return of the leddy's son frae foreign parts: had it na been for this, I should think it a long year, foreby a week, since you said, 'Farewell, my Marian!' When you were gone, I gied up to the burnside and sat me down by the stream; but, in its gurgling, I heard the sound of your voice alane, and I jumped up and ran off to the Craig point and luiked as far my eye could see; and there was a wee crimson cloud that followed the course o' the setting sun, and glinted upon the vera spot where I lost sight o' you; and I luiked upon it wi' pleasure, and thought in my silly heart that it shone prophetic o' your brilliant fortune; but even that did na comfort me! When you were present, I could think wi' pleasure, wi' pride, o' the height you were surely born to attain, and of all the fame and the glory I wished might be yours; but now you are awa', I can only think o' yoursel', such as you are now, and feel how little there is in thae high aspirations to comfort me for your loss!"

"Lord Mowbray," observed the Colonel, "was going to a court-ball when he received the above touching letter. He threw it to

me with a careless air as he buckled on his sword; and then, casting a look at his person in a long mirror, passed away to the amusements of the night: but there were more serious circumstances surrounding him to banish all remembrance of poor Marian. The brilliancy of the foreign Court, and the stirring excitement of the whole scene, and the success he met with personally, completely turned his head. In the midst of this vortex, the deep but quiet purity of the heart's eloquence had little chance of being heard; Marian's constancy and her letters became irksome to him; and one day he said to me, 'Tom, I wish you would take this tiresome correspondence off my hands. I have written but seldom, and still she writes as often as before. I expected reproaches—I almost wished for them; but since none arrive, I have no excuse for quarrelling; yet still, to allow this to go on is impossible. The fact is, you know it was a very innocent *flirtation* for the highlands of Scotland; but for both our sakes it is better ended now.' 'It had better never have begun then, my Lord,' I replied, with indignation. 'Maybe so; but it is not my fault if the girl mistook a few common attentions for a serious passion; neither am I to blame if she is not wise enough, now that she sees her mistake, to cure herself of the folly.' 'All follies are not easily cured, even when we are sensible they are follies,' I said. He waited not to listen, but was off on some quest of novel amusement. Many months lapsed away, and I was called to other scenes. Lord Mowbray received accounts from his guardians, that his mother was very ill—dangerously so. A second letter, yet more pressing, was followed by a third; stating that, if he wished to see his parent before she died, he must hasten to her. This roused him to his duty, and he returned to Heatherden. A letter which I received from him some time after will show you how much presence and place influence some characters: the first part is relative to some extraneous affairs; the latter is the sentence I wish to read to you—ay, let me see; here it is:

" 'I know not, Tom, how it is; but as I approached this scene of early love, the impressions so long effaced, or rather so concealed and choked up, seemed to start before me like a picture newly brought by a skilful hand from the dust and decay into which it has fallen. The freshness of young life itself seemed to return as I breathed the mountain air; and I awoke as from a feverish dream. My mother's illness has most unexpectedly taken a favourable turn; I have leisure to think, and inclination to think seriously. Marian's ripened beauty is more captivating than ever: unlike indeed is she, the mountain nymph, to the courtly beauties with whom I have been lately captivated; but in her natural graces I read

a thousand endearing qualities of the heart, while in theirs, I remember only the factitious airs of tutored coquetry.—Yes, I am determined Marian shall be my wife.'

"When I read this letter," continued the Colonel, "mixed feelings arose in my breast; but yet I felt, and I said, 'Thank heaven! it is so!' Some time after, I received another line from your kinsman: here it is; I have kept them all, that I may never put too much trust in man again: here is this next letter.—

"'Marian expressed to me the other day her piercing sorrow, when she found her letters were no longer answered by me in regular course. 'She was,' she said, 'more grieved on my account even than on her own; for to forget her so soon, who had been the playmate of my young days, and the friend of her early childhood, argued a light mind; but she went on to say, in her northern phrase, which from her sounds so naïve and so sweet, 'Let us never mair speak o' thae things, ye had mony matters doubtless to tak' up your attention; whereas Marian had only to think o' you, and now ye are just the same again, and a' is right.' Thus you see, Tom, I am just now where I was, as Marian expressed it, only that I am come to the resolution that Marian shall be my wife; but I cannot undergo all the violence of my mother's temper; her health too is in a very precarious state; and in the course of nature it cannot be very long before I shall be perfectly at liberty to make Marian my bride. Well, Tom, after many difficulties, and many pangs of unfeigned remorse on Marian's part, I have prevailed with her to plight her troth to me; we exchanged rings on a broomie knowe, near the Manse one evening, when none but the lintwhite and the throstle witnessed our vows.'

"How," said Colonel Pennington, casting down the letter, and striking the table violently with his hand—"how shall I detail the rest? or how shall I convey the moral I wish, and not say thy kinsman was a villain? Strange as it may seem, incredible as it appears to me even on reflection, Lord Mowbray had no sooner entered into this solemn engagement than he repented it. Marian was indeed, to use his own words,

'A lovely flower in her own wild bower.'

But how would she transplant? how look in a parterre of cultivated exotics? How would her broad Scotch accent and uncouth pronunciation of foreign tongues sound in the mouth of a Lady Ambassadress? It makes my cheek burn to think of it!" continued the Colonel, after a short pause; "pshaw! is this the language of a man! weakness—folly—villany. Poor Marian! his protracted absence at the time which he had fixed for his return, at length took *effect upon her temper* and her behaviour; her unfortunate attach-

ment undermined not only her own but her father's happiness, by depriving him of the comfort and solace of a dutiful fond child's attentions; and, in fine, carried him sooner to his grave than in all probability the course of nature would have done.—But it is enough; I will finish the sad tale briefly. Several persons of high repute in Marian's own country sought her hand in marriage; but she rejected them all, and wasted and wasted away, year after year; till, at length, Lord Mowbray wrote her a letter, recommending her to take the actual substantial good, and not wait for an uncertain one, as he found himself so deeply engaged in political transactions that he thought it very unlikely he should ever marry. He lamented, he said, to give her this advice, but it was the advice of a friend. The romantic flirtation of a boyish attachment ought not to impede her fortunes; and, therefore, he found himself in honour bound to give her back her promise. In honour!!! let no woman deceive herself for a moment on a similar occasion: the man who gives her up cares not for her."

"Base! base!" ejaculated Lord Mowbray.

"From the time," resumed the Colonel, "that Marian received this letter, she had no heart to do any thing; she drooped and withered; but, without a murmur, bowed to the decree. Your kinsman married a woman of enormous wealth; she had beauty likewise, and was what was called every body's admiration—a great comfort this to a man in his domestic life! Was it her temper, her worth, her abilities that were admired?—no; merely her form, fashion, the ephemeral attributes of a fine lady calculated to please every one while they last, except him whom it is most her duty to please. No offspring blessed this joyless union; it was a heartless compact, an exchange of rank and title for wealth; happiness could have nothing to do with the arrangement; and, a few short years of youth and splendour over, it appeared in its own native depravity. The old Lady Mowbray lived on to extreme old age. Marian never forsook her, though she was a most unloveable person; but strove with unremitting attention to compensate for the only fault she ever committed—that of having loved and trusted her faithless son. A few years after Lord Mowbray's marriage, I was present at his first interview with Marian. Her feelings were then tried to the uttermost; nor was she always exempt from blame in point of temper. Her indignation at witnessing the behaviour of Lady Mowbray to the Dowager, sometimes broke forth in expressions of contempt; for, as years go on, they add something to the asperity of every

temper, one only being's excepted,—I mean, General Montgomery's! and in poor Marian's case, who can wonder it should have been so? The world called Lord Mowbray a good man, for he was rich and lavish; the world called him a good-natured man—for he was a witty, gay, convivial companion. He had talents which effected some public services, for which Government thought fit to reward him with emoluments and honours. He had friends, or persons who assumed the title of friends, glad to be his guests, or win his money. He conformed *in the Country* (for it is held that people of fashion *in Town* are without souls for the season) to the outward rules of the established religion, and went to church, looked grave, talked of *example*, and dozed in a very respectable manner through the sermon; invited the clergyman of the parish to his Sunday's dinner regularly, and, as he came, swore the parson was a very good fellow; but his heart was cold, and the wit which exhilarated others shed no brightness within; for when he made his company laugh, he must frequently have shuddered at the contrast which he felt was so strikingly depicted in his own breast."

"You draw a melancholy picture of a mere man of fashion," observed the young nobleman.

"Receive it, my dear friend, for truth, on the faith of my experience," replied the Colonel. "Yet this very faulty and almost worthless man was gifted with a power to fascinate, such as I have rarely seen equalled. Young, old, middle-aged, all owned the spell: no, by Heaven! he was not intended to be, by nature, what he was by art. I loved him very sincerely; yes, I affirm, I love the memory of his fascination still; but as, in after-life, something of similar character, whether of good or evil, is always seen in those of the same race, though it may be modified, eradicated, or encouraged by circumstances, I tell you all these truths, Lord Mowbray, that you may have timely warning: above all, I tell them to you, that you may honour and respect womankind; and, of all womankind, Marian, the ill-fated, ill-treated Marian.—But hallo there! I say; what is that?" cried the Colonel, starting up: "did you not see a shadow pass over the opposite wall? there must be some impertinent listeners at that same window: dead for a ducat!" continued the impetuous Colonel as he lifted the only candlestick that now contained any light, and hurled it at the window, by which act, they were left in perfect darkness. Though they saw no one, they both distinctly heard suppressed laughter and whispering apparently proceeding from *some persons under* the window, which seemed to be in derision of

the Colonel's vain attack upon them, and was evidently a female's voice.

While Colonel Pennington tumbled over chairs and tables, in endeavouring to make his way to the window to discover the intruders, Lord Mowbray was groping about to find the door or the bell, that he might call for a light, and direct the servants to search in the garden for the authors of the disturbance. During these fruitless attempts, the little sharp laugh continued, with repeated peals of merriment at the confusion which increased, and at the vollies of strange oaths in which Colonel Pennington indulged; at length, when tumbling over a heavy arm-chair, he came prostrate on the floor, the mirth of his opponents at this fresh misfortune knew no bounds; the Colonel's patience was already exhausted, and, stung with defeat, he now seized the chair that had lucklessly caused his overthrow, and hurled it, and every piece of furniture within his reach, in the direction of the window. Against the window and the walls, the missiles fell with a loud crash. The noise, together with Colonel Pennington's voice, which, as he alternately called for the attendants, and swore at the culprits who had escaped him, rose to a Stentorian pitch, at length awoke many of the inhabitants of the Hall, who came running to his assistance, one after another, as fast as they could scramble on their clothes.

Mr. Sampson Skinner was the first who appeared, wrapped in a flowered silk bed-gown, and red velvet cap on his head, bearing a light; next came Miss Macalpine, in a flounced dimity night-dress, her face showing the hard lines of sorrow and age from beneath the well-plaited frill that bordered her coif. "Mercy on me!" said Lord Mowbray to himself; "can that be the Colonel's beautiful Marian? Heavens! what a face! what a figure is that for a *héroïne de roman!* what a subject for Flirtation!"

Next arrived Sir Richard Townley, with his hair *en papillottes*, his sharp nose covered with snuff, his lean legs, like two bare bones, appearing under his black silk inexpressibles, a drawn sword in one hand, and a taper in the other. These, with sundry servants of the household and ladies' maids, were assembled and assembling round the infuriated Colonel, who, half ashamed at the mischief he had caused, and the disturbance he had created, for, perhaps, only a silly, inquisitive intrusion on the part of some of the domestics of the family, scarcely knew what to say or how to explain what had happened; but his wrath was not sufficiently appeased for him to be rational, and therefore turning the tide of his displeasure

against the parties who stood before him, he inquired, angrily, "What the deuce they all meant by such confusion and dismay?"

"Why, did you not call for help, Sir?" said half a dozen voices at once.

"And isn't here the window all smattered to pieces, and the furniture tossed about, as if Old Nick had been playing at nine-pins?" said Mrs. Fenton, the housekeeper.

"Keep me! what's all this clatter about?" inquired Miss Macalpine, in a somewhat peevish tone. "Can your Lordship explain?"

"Indeed!" cried Mr. Sampson Skinner, "the case seems to speak for itself; there has been an attempt at forcible entrance against the peace of our Sovereign Lord the King. Observe, Gentlemen, the whole window is destroyed, and even the window-frames and their appurtenances much injured."

"Pshaw! man! I know that! what signifies talking about it? but the thing to discover is, who were the impertinent rascals who thrust their noses in here where they had no business; perhaps, as you say, with an intention of breaking into the house, but for me."

"They must have climbed up with some difficulty, and doubtless with bad intention," said Mr. Sampson Skinner, examining the window; "the *quo animo*, you know, is always to be considered."

Mr. Aldget, who arrived at this moment, came forward rubbing his eyes, and exclaiming, as he caught the drift of his partner's observation, "How! have we had housebreakers here? that's death by the law, and no bad job for us."

"Hush! man, you are asleep!" whispered Mr. Skinner; and shaking him roughly as he spoke, the eager lawyer was on his guard in a moment:—"Has search been made in the premises?" he continued.

"Yes, Sir; we have looked every where," quickly answered two or three of the men-servants: "and besides, the dogs were loose, and we cannot understand how *any* one could have come near the house."

"Do you mean to insinuate," cried Colonel Pennington, his anger returning at the imputation that he had been mistaken, and had unnecessarily raised the alarm—"Do you mean to say—"

"Leave the business to us, my dear Sir—leave it to us, we will take proper measures," said Mr. Aldget; "and it will be hard, indeed, if the delinquents escape our vigilance." His eyes now wide open, and sparkling at the thoughts of professional employment.

"*Pshaw!*" cried the Colonel, turning to Lord Mowbray.

What Lord Mowbray thought all this time, it was not easy to discover; but he stood apparently an amused, though quiet spectator of the scene. At length, walking to the window, and examining the facilities of approach, he contented himself with observing, that "detected housebreakers would scarcely go off tittering and laughing; that the voices they heard were not those of men; and that it was probably some of the female servants, or some of the gipsies they had heard of, who, for a frolic, or from curiosity, had thus alarmed them." And, smiling at Colonel Pennington, he wished all a good night.

Most of the disturbed persons assembled in the drawing-room were of the same opinion, and one by one they stole away. "Allow me, Miss Macalpine, to conduct you," said Colonel Pennington, who was one of the last, with the exception of the domestics, to leave the scene of confusion:—"allow me to see you safe to the door of your apartment—I hope you will take no cold. These insolent intruders who have been at work to-night shall rue the hour, and pay dearly for their temerity, if we can but lay hold of them, or my name is not Pennington. Ay, Miss Marian, I was talking over old times to the young Lord, when these curious, ill-mannered vagabonds, whoever they were, climbed the window to overhear what was saying. I know them to have been eaves-droppers, and nothing else; though the crafty knaves, Skinner and Aldget, (I wish Montgomery read their characters as I do) would magnify the thing into burglary, and heaven knows what, because such things are harvests to them: be assured, however, the parties were mere idle listeners, which is bad enough, certainly: I wish the chairs and tables had fallen on their heads, instead of on the windows; I trust their sconces will yet be broken; and, by the Lord!—"

"Dear Colonel, dinna speak so loud, you 'll awaken the General; and don't swear. Good night—we 'll talk the matter over to-morrow—good night!"

"Good night! I am sorry I have been the means of disturbing your rest, Miss Macalpine;" said the Colonel, as he kissed the withered hand she held, with something of the gallantry of former times, and left her at her chamber door.

The servants still lingered in the apartment; for servants, when roused from their warm beds, and but half awake, still love to gossip. Margery, one of the house-maids, stood lamenting over the ruin of the damask curtains, or rather over her labour of the morrow, which she foresaw would be endless in removing the shower of wax that

had fallen from the Colonel's projectile candle and candlestick; while Mrs. Fenton, the housekeeper, angrily observed, that Colonel Pennington's boisterous ways were enough to alarm a regular family out of their wits. "But never mind,' said little Mr. Aldget, who, with his partner, remained to learn all he could from all parties—" never mind, Mrs. Fenton; it is an ill wind that blows nobody good. Your friend Humphreys the glazier, and Squab the upholsterer, will be the better for this; and your friend Sampson Skinner there, and your humble servant, none the worse: and it is of no consequence to the General—what 's a few guineas to him, eh! Mrs. Fenton?—we must all, you know, have an eye to the main chance, or we shall lay by nothing for old age."

" Very true, Sir; I, for one, always thinks of laying by—that 's a fav'rite rule of mine, you know, Mr. Aldget: well, Sir, good night, Sir."

"Good night, ma'am—but where's my light?"

" Here's a candle, Sir."

" Oh! thank you—good night. Come, Skinner:" and so saying, the sprightly lawyer laid hold of his partner, and at last all the disturbed inhabitants were once more safe and quiet within their apartments.

CHAPTER VI.

" A lawyer art thou! come not nigh;
Go, carry to some other place
The hardness of thy coward eye—
The falsehood of thy sallow face!" WORDSWORTH.

MR. ABRAHAM ALDGET was a country solicitor, who acted as the General's-law-agent; he was not, it is hoped, a fair specimen of his tribe—but afforded rather an instance of anomaly in the profession to which he belonged. By early dawn, he was mounted on the General's piebald pony Surefoot, and set off, as he expressed it, to take cognizance of the affairs of the preceding evening;—he might have said of the affairs of the neighbourhood in general, for his attention was seldom confined in any of his morning circuits to one single object.

The ruling maxim, indeed, of the indefatigable Abraham, was to make a journey in behalf of one client, furnish opportunities by

which he turned to account the affairs of half a dozen others; a word here, and a word there, given in due season, in his perambulations, would, he found, often transform petty feuds and trifling jealousies into serious disputes, and thus lay the foundation of a profitable suit; while friendly offers of assistance and accommodation to his more peaceable neighbours, in regard to their purchases, contracts, bargains, &c. served his purpose equally well in another way. It is true this latter concern in their interests ended, like the more hostile proceedings of the law, in long bills, with the items: "Letters read, attendance given, interviews with A. and counter-interviews with B.; detained a long time. Journey to C., and expenses the whole day, &c. &c." But though the catastrophe removed the veil and left the astonished clients, in both instances, without ground to dispute the accuracy of such a diary, and probably, with no substantial benefit derived to them beyond their dear-bought experience, still they were invariably glad to pay, to escape the last and great misfortune of all,—an action for the bill;—and thus lived and became rich, Abraham Aldget and his partner.

Actively, however, and with a zeal and gravity becoming the duty he was upon, Mr. Aldget bestrode his pony on the present occasion, and he quitted Montgomery-hall with an assurance that he would not return and leave the offenders who had so boldly disturbed the repose of its inhabitants undiscovered. The first house in the village which caught his attention was the barber's shop, being also the coffee-house of the place. Mr. John Combie, its occupier and master, was well calculated for the double post which he held of tonsor and host. He was at once civil and loquacious, a deep politician, and a fellow of infinite jest and humour; equally at home in settling the affairs of the nation or of his neighbours over a glass of punch, as in amusing a customer when operating on his chin; and such his popularity for talent and conviviality, that he was invariably called to the chair at every village festival, where he shone the Swift of his circle.

To this person, Abraham Aldget determined to address his first inquiries, persuaded that if aught were known of the last night's proceeding, he was the man to be acquainted with it, and the very man of all others to disclose what he knew. He made up, therefore, to the shop door, and, leaning over his pony's neck, called in a cracked voice, which he tried to modulate into a tone of condescending familiarity to its inmate, "Is Mr. John at home? I say—any one in the shop?" when John Combie in *propria persona*, with

well-powdered wig (fit emblem of his art), and smirking face, popped out of the back parlour, the *caffé* apartment of the house. "Oh Mr. Aldget, Sir, is it you? won't you please, Sir, to unlight? here, Ralph, take the gentleman's horse:—a cup of coffee, Mr. Aldget? pray, Sir, do."

"No, thank ye, no, thank ye, my good friend Combie, I am in haste. I am sorry to say there was a sad affair at the Hall last night:" and he related the disturbance. "You must have some bad folks amongst you—cannot you look about you and give a guess at the delinquents? To inform against evil doers, is a praiseworthy action, and is always rewarded. I myself, you know, am not backward at drawing my purse-strings when a discovery of the kind is to be made."

"Ah!" said John Combie, with a knowing look, "that takes one penny out and brings two pennies in, Mr. Aldget."

"Well, well," rejoined the lawyer, "but do you know of no bad characters in these bounds? I shall keep the secret of your having any hand in informing, rest assured of that, Mr. Combie."

"Indeed, Mr. Aldget, you may well do so, for I have nothing to inform about. I am truly sorry the good General has been disturbed, and would gladly name the offenders if I knew 'em, but I really do not, 'pon honour, Mr. Aldget. 'Tis a sad story truly, and seems to be of a piece with the broken bridge, and the felled trees, and the other depravities committed lately, but I could not precisely say as how I could fix the deed on any one; but there is a family of the Giles's lives down near Love-lane, that they say are a very worthless set; but Squire Carlton has taken a great fancy to Jem, and always has him along with him in his fishing and sporting excursions whenever he 's at the hall; and is going to make him his gamekeeper, people says; but I could never positively fix nothing evil upon 'em, not I; and for the matter of suspicion, there be the gipsies, who are always coming about these parts. The General is too kind, Mr. Aldget, to these vagabonds, and may hap it 's some of them."

"Ay, very likely, very likely, as you say, Mr. Combie; but what is the story of the broken bridge you spoke of just now?" The latter having made himself master of that affair, remarked, with symptoms of astonishment, "that it was strange the General had not commanded him to take active measures about it; but if the General goes to sleep, it is my business to be awake, Mr. Combie; I shall look to the matter without loss of time—is there no other news, Mr. John?"

"Let me see:—why, yes—they say Squire Carlton wants to obtain Andrew's cottage for his gamekeeper, and pretends he has a right to the ground; he has been at him about it ever since he comed down this time."

"Is Mr. Carlton arrived at the Manor-house, then?" said Mr. Aldget, apparently astonished, "and I not acquainted with it—impossible!"

"Yes, but he is, though; he came there these five days ago. Well, but as I was saying, the Squire, to show his generosity, has offered the old man twice the value of his lease; but Andrew will not hear of removing; and though he used to be a great favourite heretofore, this affair has alterated things completely, and Mr. Carlton don't call any more when he passes the cottage as he used to do, nor gives no presents to Ambrose, who is going to be married to Rose, you know; and they say as how that Andrew swears he'll go to law and spend his last penny rather than yield up his right to the tenement. It requires only half an eye to see the why and wherefore of all this, though, Mr. Aldget:—foolish he! (between ourselves)" said John Combie, with one of his archest looks.

"A spirited resolve, I should rather say," rejoined Mr. Aldget: "Andrew Delvin is right—quite right; I'll give him my advice upon that subject, though Mr. Carlton, the Honourable Mr. Carlton, ought to have his way, too, if possible. Good morning to you, Mr. John. No more news stirring at present, I think you say? Well, I must not waste time, but haste to business. Good day—good day, Mr. Combie." And away trotted Mr. Aldget, his brains filled with laudable resolves not to neglect any opportunity of making a job from the cobler's stall to the princely palace: though his original errand, it must be confessed, was somewhat forgotten in the prospect just opened to him of fresh occupation in the affair of the broken bridge, and in Andrew Delvin's quarrel with Mr. Carlton; and then, by the idea which occurred of keeping up interests by waiting personally on the latter gentleman, whose agency, and his father's before him, had been a lucrative concern to Sampson Skinner and himself. In this resolution, he was strengthened as he reflected on Mr. Carlton's very unexpected return to the Manor-house; occasioned perhaps by some sudden event, which it was his duty, for his client's sake, to take cognizance of, as his phrase ran; but it was too early yet for the visit, and he turned to Delvin's cottage, therefore, in his way, where alighting, and passing the pony's bridle over the paling, he entered the little garden.

Assuming an air of protecting kindness, he accosted Andrew, who was busy at his work, with a "How goes it, master? it is some months since I have had the pleasure of seeing you. Why, how your little plantation is grown! and your garden! Bless me! how thriving every thing looks! And there's the pretty moon-eyed Rose, the pride of the village, just as beautiful as ever! Well! my good Andrew, I give you joy of this little paradise; possessing these, you need envy no man."

"Nor do I, Mr. Abraham; I can assure you of that, Sir. I have lived here these forty years, and here, please God! I will die. But though I envy no man, there's some do envy me!"

"Oh! many, Andrew. Many, I should suppose, must envy you."

"Very true, Sir! very true; but that is not as I meant it, do ye see. I didn't mean that some may say, 'I wish I were as well off as old Andrew Delvin," for that is an honest, natural wish; and I wish they were, with all my heart! But there's a great Squire not an hundred miles off, that wants to ferret a poor man out of his house: the more shame for 'un—but I'll see him hang'd upon one of his own trees first."

"How's this, Andrew! you seem warm,—explain, explain, I beg. State your case; but don't be in a passion, Mr. Delvin—don't be in a passion: I have known more causes lost by loss of temper, than by any other way in the world."

"I be rather a hot one, that's sure; but it's enough to put a man in a passion, to see the rich and great, who have a power more money than they know what to make use on, wanting to deprive a poor man of his lawful rights, and turn him out of his own house, in his old days, to seek a new place to die in. Why, there be shame on the very face of such proceedings!"

"But instead of getting into a passion, I wish you would explain matters coolly, Mr. Delvin; and then I shall see what to make of them."

"Why, Mr. Abraham, there's Squire Carlton has the impudence to say he has the power, and will use it if I don't agree to his terms, as he calls them, to turn me out of this bit of ground, that I have worked in these forty years and upwards! He has the power to do this, truly? dang me! if I believe one word of it. Do you think he has? You know the law, Mr. Aldget," continued Andrew, wiping his forehead.

"*You have a lease,* haven't you?" inquired the lawyer.

"Yes, Sir, to be sure, from his own father! he can't deny that. His father lived among us as a father; but this here Squire, whom we never saw till last year, used to come here when he was at the Hall every day, cajoling my daughter, and telling her how he would give her a great portion, and make me a rich man too; and wanted me at that time to exchange my farm of Delvin Side, for one of his new houses out upon the moor yonder. I thought it all mighty civil then, though I did not know the reason on't; but now I knows for why it is, and I despise him for his cunning: 'tis that he may settle Jem Giles, the biggest villain in the country, in my place. But I told him a bit of my mind; and I think he'll not come here again in a hurry!"

"Why, Andrew, you have a good tough spirit of your own, and seem to feel (and let me tell you you are right, my friend), that in this country the peasant is as secure in his cottage as the king on his throne, and so it should be; but, remember, if ever you stand in need of any assistance in this affair, or any other, I am at hand and will counsel you for the best—but don't give up your rights, man, whatever you do."

"No, I won't; I'll go to the workhouse afore that!" said the old man, striking his spade into the ground.

"And Rose, hark ye," continued Mr. Aldget, "are you not going to be married?"

"Yes, if you please, Sir," said Rose, curtseying.

"Well, take care, child, and have a bit of a deed drawn up, to secure you your own. Your father, you know, has got something, and that will be yours, won't it, Andrew?"

"Ay, God bless her! to be sure. She is the joy of her old parents' eyes, Mr. Aldget; and I wish it were more, for her sake."

"Well, whatever it may be, it is always better to look to these things in time. Apply to us, and we will do that job for you: it costs but a trifle."

"I am sure we are all much obliged to you, Sir," said the old man, bowing.

Abraham remounted Surefoot, and turned the pony's head as though he were going to the Hall; but once out of sight of the cottage, he set off at a smart canter towards the Manor-house. "Let your master know Mr. Aldget is come," said he to the servant. And the next moment he was ushered into the room where Mr. Carlton was still at breakfast.

"I am glad to see you, Mr. Aldget; I was going to send for you,

as I did not think you could know of my return; it is rather unexpected to myself."

"Oh! pardon me, Sir," replied the wily lawyer, "that were impossible! Your arrival among your people causes too much happiness for me not to hear of it; and the moment I did so, I could not forget my duty."

"Well! sit down, Sir; sit down, you are welcome. Will you take breakfast?"

"With much pleasure, Sir; a fine, sharp spring air begets a good appetite." And when he had appeased his hunger, which seemed by no means an assumed one, spite of the cold ham and chocolate provided for him ere he quitted Montgomery-hall, Mr. Carlton addressed him: "Now we must to business, if you please, Mr. Aldget. You will be astonished when I tell you, that Old Delvin has refused to give up the lease of the few paltry acres on which his house stands, though I have offered him handomely for doing so; full double what his term is worth; but he spurns my offer and defies me: and yesterday, when I spoke to him, and at last, angry with his obstinacy and unmannerly behaviour, hinted that the affair was in my power, he swore he would pull the Manor-house about my ears, before he allowed me to turn him out of his tenement: this is language I cannot suffer, and I desire, therefore, Mr. Aldget, that you will instantly examine his lease, and see what can be done. I have some faint recollection, in old Sarah Woodruffe's case, whom you removed last Michaelmas, that you, or Mr. Skinner, told me I could eject her, owing to some clause in her lease. I do not remember whether you availed yourself of this; but all the leases, I believe, are on the same tenure."

"Yes, Sir!" replied Mr. Aldget; "yes, we did: or otherwise the old woman would have been there still. But we succeeded in turning her out—let me see, it was two days before Christmas Day, the snow was on the ground,—and she died soon after, in the workhouse."

"Well, Sir; never mind that now," resumed Mr. Carlton; "this old Delvin *must* be served in the same way if he will not hear reason."

"Most undoubtedly, Mr. Carlton, I will look to the lease immediately. I must be for the next two days at General Montgomery's: but I will send for the papers. You *did* make known to him your generous intention, I think you said, Sir, of indemnification for loss or removal, &c.?"

"To be sure I did; but he is as intractable as a mule, and as viciously inclined, it appears, to me. Right or wrong, however,

Mr. Aldget, I desire to know—is it not your opinion that I can force him to law with me, and so ruin him?"

"Nothing is easier than that," rejoined Mr. Aldget; "but then, you know, Sir, with men of character, like Mr. Sampson Skinner and myself, if this intention appeared upon the face of our proceedings, we should be ruined ourselves."

"Bah! don't talk to me in that tone, Sir; is it not the very essence of your calling to make the worse appear the better reason, and to take every thing in hand, however desperate, provided it promises to give you employment? At all events, I am determined the thing shall be tried. If a clause in the lease of the other tenant enabled me to eject her, it is more than probable the same will be found in old Delvin's, if you look into it narrowly."

Abraham Aldget saw clearly enough, that Mr. Carlton's mind was made up on the point; and though the recollection of the odium he had undergone in poor Sarah Woodruff's business made him reluctant to engage in a similar affair, yet this feeling was nothing in the balance against Mr. Carlton's agency: the loss of which, he foresaw, might follow a refusal to meet his wishes. "True, Sir! true!" he replied hastily; and as if recollecting himself, "I had forgotten the possibility of the lease helping us. If we find sufficient grounds in Delvin's lease, the case is altered entirely. Nothing can be more fair or proper, than to take advantage—*honourable* advantage, I mean—of such a circumstance: especially when your overtures in the first instance have been so very liberal—princely, I may say. If we find this clause, there can be no difficulty whatever."

"Be it so, then, and set about the matter instantly; remember I have the thing much at heart, and it must be carried through without any of the law's delays. I flatter myself you have always found me liberal; and you will do so in the present instance, if after having explained my wishes, I find you attend properly to them." Mr. Carlton laid a marked emphasis on the latter words, which produced in his hearer a conviction that something worse than *no* reward would attend his neglect of them.

Quickly, therefore, he replied, "Depend upon my services, Sir; they shall be exerted to the uttermost:" and so saying, he made his bow and retired, well pleased, notwithstanding the scruples he had at first professed, with the issue of his visit.

As soon as he had crossed his pony, this indefatigable person recollected another claim upon his attention. The apothecary of

the neighbouring post-town had a dispute with his next neighbour, the grocer, about a certain bay-window, built to enlarge his shop, whereby the premises of the latter were considerably darkened, and his property injured; so, in the belief, therefore, that an indictment against this nuisance would probably be the fruit of a short conversation with his friend, Joseph Drench, he turned a mile and a-half out of his direct road to make the experiment. "At any rate," said he to himself, "if Drench has not spirit enough to go to law, I may talk to Figg on the subject, and bring matters in this way to an issue, that will require our interference."

Pursuing these and other reflections, he rode slowly on; but his restless mind was always on the alert for fresh objects; and the thought struck him, that the Carlton manors, lying contiguous to the Montgomery estate, would, if united to it, form a property of such value, as to render the annexation a matter of the highest importance to their possessor. It was a thought not to be hastily dismissed; and though Abraham Aldget saw not clearly how any particular advantage would accrue to himself in the matter (beyond what the changes and annexations of property are sure to afford his profession), still he went on ruminating upon an idea, which in itself was life and aliment to his spirit. "I have it," he said, at length (and the Grecian philosopher pronounced his triumphant *Eureka* with no prouder feelings than did Abraham Aldget this solution of his problem),—"I have it! Mr. Carlton must marry Lady Emily. Yes, it must be so:—and no small benefit is to be derived from the very drawing up of the settlements in an affair so complicated. Let me see: first, we have Montgomery estate in entail; then, failing issue, in entail, to children of next heir—but failing male heir only to Carlton estate, both said properties devolve in right to female issue of marriage—and so, estates joined in perpetuity to heirs male and female in succession."

A deep reverie followed this soliloquy, during which Abraham Aldget conjured up as many fair visions as ever lover did in dreaming of his mistress; but his pony, meanwhile, had not entered into the motives which induced the rider to turn from the direct road home: and, availing himself of the liberty which the bridle hanging loosely on his neck had given him, he crept unperceived into a by-path conducting more immediately to the Hall. Down this, he was proceeding at a quick amble, such as horses voluntarily adopt as they move homeward, when suddenly his off-leg slipped into a tre*mendous* hole, and the shock had nearly brought poor Surefoot and

his burthen into the mire together. The former struggled to recover his lost equilibrium; and the latter, thoroughly roused from his reverie by a sense of the danger he had escaped, now hastily descended, resolved to place his neck no longer in jeopardy, but to reconnoitre before he proceeded farther. As he looked round, he discovered that he had left almost all track of the beaten path, and stood in a kind of slough, which formed a boundary between the estates of his two clients, Carlton and Montgomery, and from which, on the right hand or left, there appeared to be no hope of extricating himself.

In this dilemma, doubting whether to proceed or to turn back, his attention was suddenly roused by hearing voices that were familiar to him; and, from some words that came distinctly to his hearing, his curiosity was stimulated to listen to the discourse of the speakers. Leaving Surefoot to indulge his propensity for some long fresh-budding grass which grew on the farther side of the bank, he stepped on, softly screened from observation by a thick quick-set hedge, and soon ascertained that the colloquy was passing between Mr. Carlton and Rose Delvin.

"Indeed, Mr. Carlton, I cannot stop with you no longer; I promised father not to speak to you, and I must not break my promise, you know."

"Break your promise! nonsense, pretty one!—why, don't you know what a promise means? Why, a promise is made to be broken, except it is voluntarily given with all your heart and soul. Now, I am sure your promise was not a willing one in the present instance. Rose, dear Rose, do not say it was."

"What a pity it is," thought Mr. Aldget, "that he is not a lawyer!"

"Willing or not willing, Mr. Carlton," rejoined Rose, "you know I must obey my parents, else what did I learn my catechism for? Pray, pray let go my hand."

"Nay, now, Rose, my moon-eyed Rose, do not be so coy. Hear me you shall whether you like it or not: I will not lose this opportunity. I advise you, for own sake, to let me speak quietly to you; why, dear one! you have nothing to fear from me. Sit down on this bank, and let us have a little conversation."

"Well, Sir, remember it is not my fault; I did not agree to meet you: you have caught me and—and I must listen to you: butpr ay take your arm away, Mr. Carlton."

"Your *fault, sweet Rose*? no—you can commit no fault.

Young, gentle, beautiful, and enchanting as you are, you *must* be in the right. I vow, as you sit there on that bank, you look more fit to be a queen on a throne than a country maiden."

"La, now, Mr. Carlton! don't ye speak so; it makes me quite ashamed to hear ye."

"Listen to me, Rose. It is quite impossible that you should be designed to become the partner of a country boor, to churn butter and feed poultry; those beautiful eyes were formed for very different purposes than to open on a farm-yard, or attract the louts at a country fair; that divine figure cannot be destined to coarse hard work; nor those delicate fingers, which tempt a kiss, be doomed only to knit and to spin! Rose, my sweetest Rose, leave off such low pursuits. Dismiss Ambrose, and trust to me; you shall see to what a rank I will elevate you; you shall never hear any thing but the sweetest sounds; never wear any thing but the richest jewels; your beauties shall be arrayed in the most costly attire:

> 'Ecstatic powers shall your whole life employ,
> And every sense be lost in every joy.'"

"Goodness gracious, Sir! what signifies talking to me so? just like what one reads in a printed book. You know I'm engaged to Ambrose Philips; we have kept company these two years, and he'll break his heart if I leave him, that's sure."

"Ha, ha, ha!" replied Mr. Carlton, laughing; "break his heart! no, no, men's hearts don't break, pretty one; 'Men have died from time to time, and worms have eaten them, but not for love.'—Break his heart! no, no, believe me, he'll go on breaking stones and mending roads just as usual, whether you dismiss him or not, as he ought to do, for he is fit for nothing else; but if it were not so, better fifty such hearts were broken, than that you should become the prey of a country loon—a Calliban—a monster, such as he."

"No, indeed, he's not a monster, and he loves me better than you, perhaps;—let go my hand, Mr. Carlton."

"Well, well, be calm, and don't spoil your beauty by frowning so, and I will do exactly as you desire, pretty one."

"Oh, Mr. Carlton, I am much troubled in mind; let me go home:—oh! what if father and mother could see me now, what would they say to me? what could I say to them?"

"Why, laugh, to be sure, love, and tell them you had found a lover more suited to you than the coarse Caliban they design for *your husband.*"

"Indeed I could not do that, Mr. Carlton; mother would pierce me through with a look, and father would strike me dead at his feet."

"Good God! Rose, it is you who now alarm me!" exclaimed Mr. Carlton, in affected horror.—"What, are they such unnatural parents? then, indeed, you should have no scruple in telling them you have placed yourself under my protection."

"Oh, Sir, my mother and——"

"What! Rose, am I to be refused and despised, and all my offers disregarded for a hundred of *your* relations!—Pray, how many uncles and aunts and cousins to the hundred and fourth generation of the noble family of Delvins am I yet to contend with in your favour."

"Sir, none of my family are noble; that is to say, they be none of them lords or ladies, and that's what you call noble, I believe; but they be all good people: I have two uncles and one aunt, and ——"

"Oh! my silly Rose, now could I find it in my heart to be out of all patience with you, but that you are so lovely:" and Mr. Carlton passed his arm round her waist.

"So lovely," cried Ambrose furiously, who had come upon them unperceived, "that you nor no villain shall take her from me:"—and he pushed Mr. Carlton aside violently with one arm, while he snatched Rose to his bosom with the other.

Mr. Carlton staggered to regain his feet.—"How now, fellow; am I to speak to no one on my own estate without *your* leave and authority? things are come to a pretty pass, indeed, when the clown is to give law to the man who supports him:—away with you, fellow! or it shall go ill with you."

"Mr. Carlton," said Ambrose, trying to suppress his passion, "I find it very hard to keep my hands from off you: if you were any other than you are, I would tell you, if you be a man, to give me fair play, and——"

"Take that," said Mr. Carlton—"take that, insolent hind!" and he struck him a blow which would have brought one of less stout frame than Ambrose to the ground.

"Nay, if you be for that work, have at ye!" exclaimed Ambrose, driven past his patience: and springing upon Mr. Carlton, he would have borne him down with the impetuosity of his attack, but his foot slipped and he fell.

"Villain!" cried Mr. Carlton, as he tore a stake from the hedge-

row and brandished it over the prostrate Ambrose—"villain! you are in my power!" Rose screamed loudly; but her lover, springing once more on his feet, flung himself upon Mr. Carlton, wrested the stick from his hand, and hurling it away, cried "There 's for ye, coward!" while at the same time raising his arm, with one blow he felled him to the earth.

"Murder! murder! help, help, murder!" cried Mr. Aldget, coming forth from his concealment, and muttering to himself, as he scrambled through the hedge, "here are fine doings: here is assault and battery on one hand—a plea of self-defence on the other—a seduced maiden, and a breach of promise of marriage. Carlton versus Ambrose, Ambrose versus Carlton, and Rose Delvin versus —— I say, murder—help, murder! will nobody come to my assistance?" In the mean time, Rose was borne away, half fainting, by Ambrose; and Mr. Carlton lay extended, speechless, and bleeding, on the ground.

CHAPTER VII.

An hypocrite is the worst kind of player, by so much as he acts the better part. While he makes many beggars, he keeps some. He turneth all gnats into camels, and cares not to undo the world for a circumstance. In brief, he is the stranger's saint, the neighbour's disease, an angel abroad, a devil at home.

BISHOP HALL.

"I WONDER where Mr. Aldget can be," said General Montgomery, when every body at the Hall had assembled at dinner, and that gentleman's place remained vacant: "he is not wont to be so late: I fear, the business of last night has caused him a good deal of trouble."

"Doubtless, General, something connected with the affair of last night has occurred to detain him in the neighbourhood; but Mr. Aldget is very cautious, and the pony is very steady, and I am under no alarm. Mr. Humphreys, a little bit of the fat, if you please," whispered Mr. Skinner to the servant, who was carving: "a very fine haunch, indeed, my friend Aldget has missed," he added, turning to the General.

But he was not doomed to miss it, for at that very moment Mr. Aldget entered. "I hope you will excuse me, General, and all the

ladies and gentlemen," (bowing to them) "I hope you will excuse my being so late, and my dirty boots; but I have been so busy—hardly time to turn round, I assure you, so busy."

"Ah! there you are at last, my good Sir; well, what has detained you so many hours? give us an account of your adventures."

"Directly, General—you shall be obeyed directly; only suffer me to take one mouthful, if you please; I have hardly tasted food to-day."

"You must have some dinner first, to be sure, my good Sir. Humphreys, let Mr. Aldget have some soup, and the fish; I desired some to be kept ready for you, and," (a pause) "you look fatigued; a glass of sherry or Madeira, meanwhile, which do you prefer?—a glass of Madeira, Humphreys, to Mr. Aldget."

"I thank you, General, a glass of wine will be most welcome—but no soup—no fish, I thank you. I'll take a slice of that haunch, Mr. Humphreys, if you please."

In truth, the haunch had filled Abraham's eye from his entering the room; and salutations and offerings of every kind were lost upon him, in the contemplation of this dish of his affections. "You may give me another slice, Mr. Humphreys, the keen air has made me hungry; I have had hard work, Skinner," as he jogged the elbow of his partner; but his eye was still on the plate, which Humphreys, knowing whom he served, continued loading with choice morsels.

The General, in the interval, addressed his inquiry to Mr. Skinner, asking him if he knew whether his friend had been detained by any discovery obtained of the intruders of last night; when the latter, without turning his head from the point of attraction, and with knife and fork erect in either hand, answered—"Directly, General—you shall be obeyed directly; suffer me only to eat a mouthful, for I am quite exhausted. Such dreadful events—such awful"—but here the eagerly expected plate was handed to him, and all other considerations became absorbed in the enjoyment of its contents. A few minutes well employed, however, sufficed to the rapid Mr. Aldget; when turning to the General, he said—

"I have been detained upon a very unlucky—a very dreadful business. Poor Mr. Carlton has been rudely assaulted by a fellow that resides in the village—one of his labourers, I believe, who works on his grounds: he is grievously wounded, and I really can hardly say whether he will recover."

"Good heavens! how very shocking!" reechoed round the table.

"But tell us how?—where?—in open daylight too?—do let us hear, Mr. Aldget."

"Was he robbed to any great amount?" inquired Mr. Skinner, before his partner could reply to the numerous questions put to him.

The company sat eager for explanation. "You shall hear," said Mr. Aldget pompously—"you shall hear. The story runs thus:" and he began as though he fancied he was stating the case in Court: —"Mr. Carlton, the honourable Mr. Carlton, was going fishing —yes, fishing;—he is very fond of fishing, it is his favourite sport; —and he chanced to come to a stile,—no, a hedge,—yes, it was a hedge,—at the same time that Rose Delvin, a pretty-looking girl, was getting over the said hedge. Somehow the girl tripped, and was very near having a bad fall, when Mr. Carlton caught her by the arm and saved her; but at the same moment, this rude fellow —Ambrose Philips, I believe, is his name—came up, and without a word passing, or any apparent reason for such mad conduct, flew upon Mr. Carlton," (pause) "knocked him down," (pause) "and while on the ground, then and there proceeded to farther acts of violence. My providential arrival alarmed him, and he made off; but my attention was of course directed to the sufferer, who lay extended, apparently without life, and the villain escaped. We shall soon, however, hear of his apprehension, for constables are already in pursuit of him, and——"

"Where did you get the warrant?" said Skinner eagerly.

"Why, man! from the nearest magistrate, to be sure;" he had almost said "from Mr. Carlton himself;" but as the name hung on his lips (for the fact was indeed so), he reflected on this want of tact which was so near betraying him, and destroying the interest of his auditors, in a person whom he desired they should consider at the point of death; and he stopped abruptly, while he kicked his partner Skinner's legs under the table, to enforce his silence also. Mr. Aldget's embarrassment did not escape Lady Emily.

"Surely," she said, "there must be some mistake: are you certain that your alarm at the moment allowed you to understand this matter aright? there must be some mistake."

"Oh, no mistake, Lady Emily!—no mistake: I can make deposition both as to person and circumstances."

"Ambrose Philips could not have acted as he is represented to have done!" exclaimed Lady Emily warmly. "There is not a man in the village who bears such a character as Ambrose for industry and quiet demeanour and kindly disposition: but if it be so——"

"I assure your Ladyship, I am correct," said Mr. Aldget drily, as if he had made up his mind not to be cross-questioned, or unnecessarily drawn into farther details—"I am quite correct: it is as I have said, I can assure your Ladyship."

"Poor Rose! I am truly sorry for her," said Lady Emily; "her affections were bound up in Ambrose, and they were just going to be married. I will still hope your account is exaggerated, Mr. Aldget, and that you are not yet thoroughly acquainted with the particulars."

"I wish I could believe so, since I perceive your Ladyship so distressed on the subject," said Mr. Aldget; and anxious to give a turn to an affair that would not bear examination, he took advantage of the allusion to Rose's name, as he added, "It is my province now to correct your Ladyship; I am afraid the partiality you entertain for Rose Delvin renders you perhaps blind to her defects; but it is well known in the village that she is a light girl: and, if I may be allowed to say so, unworthy of the favour your Ladyship bestows upon her; and I am sure, knowing as I do the truth, that in this affair Mr. Carlton deserves sympathy more than either Ambrose Philips or Rose Delvin herself."

"I am very sorry, Mr. Aldget," replied Lady Emily, "for any body who is in a state of suffering; but I cannot believe that Ambrose could have been the perpetrator of such violence, unprovoked, and, I rather suspect——"

"What does your Ladyship suspect?" said Mr. Aldget quickly.

"Why, that there has been some reason or other, of which you may be possibly ignorant, that, when known, will remove the load of guilt from Ambrose. You know, Mr. Aldget, there are at least two ways of telling a story."

"I always thought Emily's *enjouement* for this girl would end in something disagreeable," whispered Lady Frances to Lord Mowbray; "it will cure her, I hope, of taking up people in a sphere of life so beneath her own; one is sure to suffer for it in some way or other."

"Lady Emily will learn experience and attend to your warning voice another time!" said Lord Mowbray ironically, and casting a glance at Emily, who sat with downcast eyes and flushed cheek, as she heard herself the object of these remarks.

The General looked at her kindly. "I do not wonder you feel this, my dear love, and we must all confess you plead the cause of your protégée well; but I fear it is a bad case: we will not, however, prejudge poor Rose, but will wait to hear farther."

"My dear uncle!" exclaimed Lady Emily.

"Hech, Sirs!" said Miss Macalpine, "I wouldna wist. Gin Rose Delvin's fause, there's no' that countenance living I would pin my faith on—puir lassie!—but she was aye a dauted bairn; and I mind ye were oft craiking at her, for ye spied mony fairlies in her, that ye cared na to allow o'. Well-a-well! wha can hinder the wind to blaw—no' a bit but it's a pity."

"A pity, indeed!" said Lady Frances; "and while we are discussing and pitying her, Mr. Carlton perhaps is on his death-bed, and no one seems to think of him. But Emily affects a sort of radicalism in her sentiments: and if all the aristocracy were swept away at once—like the old *dévote* in Moliere, *elle ne s'en souciera pas plus que ça*—but let one of the *people* suffer,—and then we hear of nothing but persecution, oppression, and injustice—and the whole force of her sympathies is at once awakened."

"You are mistaken, Frances—you know you are," said Emily, throwing back her lovely head with the look of a princess. I am perhaps *too* sensible of the pride of birth. I would not for a thousand worlds, any more than yourself, disgrace it; but what has that to do with the present question? Rose Delvin's good name is as dear to her and her parents as if she were descended from a nobler race; and I will not sit by and hear her so spoken of; I will do as I would be done by."

"What a tirade! my dear Emily; surely this is one of the speeches you used to learn by heart in the school-room. Miss Devenish would be delighted, could she hear how well you quote; but I only meant to laugh at your romance. You know you are always talking about love in a cottage."

Lady Emily looked distressed. "And pray what is the chief subject of *your* conversation, Lady Frances, if I may take the liberty of asking?" questioned Lord Mowbray.

"Love in a palace, perhaps," was her reply; "at all events, certainly nothing sentimental: I do not deal in sentiment; I leave that to Emily."

"I believe you are right," he rejoined; "it's best repenting in a coach and six."

"But why must we repent at all?" said Emily.

"Why, indeed!—except that we do not all resemble Lady Emily," said Lord Mowbray.

"It is as I have the honour of telling you," said Mr. Aldget, who, having been called up to the General's side, was relating the story

over again, while the foregoing conversation took place at the other end of the table. Mr. Carlton's life is in the most imminent danger; they have sent to town for medical aid, and Mr. Drench, who says he does not know what to think, remains stationed at his bed-side to watch over him. I shall be at the Manor-house early to-morrow, and shall then know farther as to the issue of the affair."

"It is a bad business, Sir," said the General; "old Philips is one of the most respectable men in his station, that I know. He will never recover his son's ill-conduct that man has high feelings of honour and integrity, and this boy is his only one. I believe——"

"I think you do not know Mr. Carlton," said Colonel Pennington.

"Yes, I have seen him," replied the General, "but not for some time. His father and I, unfortunately, differed on some business in the county, and his want of temper did not allow us to meet afterwards on terms of cordiality: but it is not fitting that these resentments should be carried on from father to son; indeed, my resentment died with the words that gave it birth; but it is necessary that I evince it no longer exists—especially under present circumstances. Emily, dearest love," (turning to her) "mind that we send this evening to inquire for Mr. Carlton, and I will call myself to-morrow at the Manor-house."—So absorbed, however, was Lady Emily in the idea of Rose's misery, that when she quitted her uncle's presence, this injunction had entirely escaped her; and it was to her sister she was indebted for the recollection of it, in time: an instance of solicitude so at variance with Lady Frances's usually careless and indifferent habits, as to create astonishment by its occurrence.

The evening of a day that had brought forth such events passed, unlike all others at the Hall, languidly away; and General Montgomery called for music at an earlier hour than he was wont. It suited with his gentle spirit to dispel the painful feelings which chequer life, by the harmony of sweet sounds, and music in his domestic circle was ever at hand to soothe the ruffled mind when any passing sorrow occurred to disturb its tranquillity. But, although Lady Emily acknowledged the power of this charm in all its force—for she resembled her uncle in the heavenly sweetness of her disposition—she found its influence on her mind that night exerted in vain. In vain she endeavoured to banish the remembrance of Rose and her lover from her thoughts; the sad history returned again and again to trouble her dreams long after she had retired to rest. "Emily

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Emily!" cried Lady Frances, calling from her bed to her sister; "it is now my turn to waken you,—what is the matter? you are moaning so fearfully, it makes me quite nervous to hear you."

"O dear Frances, I have had such a terrible vision—there—there it is still!"

"What is there?"

"Oh, I cannot bear to tell you—do you not see it?"

"Poh! poh! how childish you are; sit up in your bed and look about you; you are not thoroughly awake yet."

"Well, Frances, I do look, and oh, fearful sight, there it still is!—do you not see it?"

Lady Frances drew aside her bed-curtains,—a small lamp shed a glimmering light in the room—which was one of those large, wainscoted apartments of the Elizabethan time, that with its dark oak panelling was sombrous even in daylight, and, in the present flickering of the lamp, rendered it scarcely possible to distinguish objects at the farther end,—but Lady Frances thought she beheld a figure moving through the doubtful gloom; and, while she gazed intently to ascertain whether such was the fact, or whether it was her fancy which deceived her, the figure glided between her and the light! Instantly she sprang up and in terror rang her bell. In another minute, their female attendants, who slept in an apartment adjoining, entered the room. "Watson," said Lady Frances, "did you hear footsteps in the gallery as you passed, and was our room-door closed?"

"My Lady!" said the abigail, hardly awake, and as if she had obeyed the summons from habit in her sleep—"What did your Ladyship say?"

"Did you hear any noise like people moving, and was my door open or shut?"

"Oh! open—my Lady—no, shut."

"Which do you mean?" asked Lady Frances with impatience.

"Why really, my Lady, I cannot say, I came in in such haste."

"Nonsense!" replied Lady Frances. "That some being or other, however, walked through the room just now, I cannot doubt. Go, one of you, and desire Mrs. Fenton to come to me instantly."

"Has my Lady seen a ghost!" asked Lady Emily's attendant of her mistress.

"Ghaists?" cried Miss Macalpine, whose restless disposition generally kept her awake half through the night, and who, alarmed at a repetition, as she imagined, of the preceding evening's distur-

bance, hastily entered the room. "What is all this about ghaists?"

"I don't know," said Lady Emily, who shook from head to foot with nervous agitation; "but Frances saw it too, or I should think I had been dreaming——"

"It? what? my dear Lady Emily?"

"O, pray, Miss Macalpine, do not alarm yourself," said Lady Frances; "you only make Emily more nervous. I wanted the housekeeper."

Mrs. Fenton now made her appearance, rather displeased at this recurring interruption of her night's rest; but she listened as a person to whom power was delegated, while Lady Frances directed that the men-servants might look narrowly through the house; for that some evil-disposed persons, for the sake of plunder or some other cause, were certainly wandering about it. "And let two of them afterwards sit up in the hall, at the bottom of the staircase," added Lady Frances; "our doors shall be carefully bolted, and, I dare say, we shall have no more apparitions.—Emily, come—go to sleep again—how foolish you are to be so frightened——"

"Dinna speak sae proud like, Lady Frances: I canna say that I just believe in spirits, but I'm no' that sure either that there is nane —we canna speak to thae things, it's best to let them alane athegither."

"Dear Miss Macalpine, I am too sleepy to dispute with you; pray leave us now,—I shall have the headach all to morrow, if I am not left to get some quiet repose."

But though her sister appeared thus to make light of their recent alarm, Lady Emily had been too much agitated to compose herself again to sleep. "Alpinia, I wish you would sit up with me," she whispered, "in my dressing room: we shall not disturb Frances, and I shall be better talking with you than lying restless in my bed."

The pleasure derived from listening to Miss Macalpine's long stories made Emily, in some measure, forget her fears; and in their lengthened *tête-à-tête*, the time was beguiled till the morning dawned. As soon, however, as it appeared sufficiently advanced, she declared her intention of going to the Delvins, and endeavouring to learn the particulars of yesterday's fatal occurrence. "I shall be back shortly, Alpinia," pressing the hand of her warm-hearted friend as she spoke: and then stealing gently through her sister's apartment, and hastening across the park, Lady Emily was soon *at the gate of the Delvin's* farm. She opened the wicket and

knocked at the door; there was a murmuring of voices as if in consultation whether she was to be admitted or not. "Oh! 'tis Lady Emily," said Maude Delvin, opening to give her entrance: but instead of the gladsome welcome she was wont to receive, the old couple stood silent, with countenances expressive of shame and distress; and Rose was sitting sulkily, balancing herself on her chair, and a half-knit stocking in her hand. She rose abruptly, but evidently put on a hardened look, as much as to say, I shall not own myself in the wrong.

Lady Emily now addressed Maude. "I have heard a terrible story, but I am come to inquire into the truth of it from yourselves, and to know if there is any thing in which I can serve you."

There was a dead silence;—Maude looked at old Andrew, as if she wished him to speak. "Sit down, my good friends," said Lady Emily kindly, "and let us talk over this affair quietly: be quite open with me; you know I only desire to think as favourable as possible of every body."

"Dear Lady," cried the old man "your kindness quite upsets me; my words will not come out of my throat; would to God that Rose were as dutiful a child as ye be a kind and excellent Lady! O Lady Emily, that girl—that we took so much pride in—too much, it may be,—and so we are punished for't, and she's become our shame—and then Squire Carlton—big a villain as he is—yet would I give this very farm, and my whole stock along with't, to know that he were alive and well this minute."

"Yes, your Ladyship must know," said Maude (taking upon her to spare her husband the rest of the tale), "that I have all along told Rose no good would or could come of that Mister Carlton's hankering about our doors, and I positively forbade her taking presents; but she, foolish thing, was quite set up on high, and said I talked like an old woman that did not know nothing of the ways of the world, or what folks did, now-a-days; every body, she said, walked and talked and sat with every body, and folks were not so proud now as they used to be."

"O mother!" interrupted Rose, endeavouring to say something in extenuation.

"Hold your tongue, girl; don't say another word—you have said too much already: but you see, my Lady, what has come of it all—Rose went out, and I fear me she went out by promise to meet the gentleman."

"*Lord! mother,* I told you before I did no such thing!"

"O hush, Rose," said Lady Emily; "I fear you have acted imprudently—do not answer your mother in that tone."

"Hold your tongue, hardened girl; I have no patience with you," cried her father :—"and so my Lady, poor Ambrose came by where they two were sitting, and seeing the Squire, as he told us, with his arm round Rose's waist, he just chucked him to one side, and caught the girl away on the other; upon which, Squire Carlton provoked and taunted un, till at last they fell to fisty-cuffs, and Philip got the better of him, as I'm glad he did, and hit him a stroke behind the ear which knocked him down. It served him right, an' that it did : but then the law—the law will come in, I am afeard; and if he should die! oh, what will become of Ambrose? And for that hussy there, what will wipe off her disgrace? And how shall we ever show our faces again?"

"I didn't do nothing, indeed I didn't, my Lady," said Rose, at last moved to tears, "that I need to be ashamed of; and if father and mother is so hard, it's enough to make me do wrong. Philips is a cruel cross fellow, and that's what he is, and I'm glad I've found him out before I'm tied for life. What! he pretend, indeed, that he wouldn't marry me! I wouldn't marry *him*, and so there's for him;" and she burst into passionate weeping.

"How you astonish and shock me, Rose!" said Emily compassionately : "why, have you not pledged your faith to become Ambrose's wife? and, after a courtship of two years, will you thus let a slight quarrel separate you for ever?"

"I don't care for him," said Rose; "he treated me like—no, I'll never speak to him again!"

"Oh, Rose, think what provocation he had; remember what cause he had for forgetting himself; and think, too, who gave him that provocation. You will never be happy again—never, Rose, if you do not think better of this matter."

Rose made no answer, but sobbed violently. "Oh, my Lady, she is harder than our hearth-stone. We must pray God will please to turn her in time; but it seems just as if we were to be punished for having thought too much of her. Oh, my Lady, we were far, far too proud of her!"

At this moment the father of Ambrose entered; he took off his hat to Lady Emily, who eagerly inquired for his son. "They have taked him away this very morning, and clapped him up in the county gaol," said the old man, with a sort of unnatural composure : "but I am not afraid; he shall have the best counsel in the

land" (striking his stick on the ground) "to defend him, and every honest man will stand by him, for standing by his own. Yes, I be sorrier far for my friends here, than for myself. My child is a good child, but *their* child—I will not say what she is."

"Well, Mr. Philips," interrupted Rose sullenly, "I will say this —that if you have nothing but ill to say of me, you had better say it to some one else, and not set father and mother against their own child: I repeat, that I did not do nothing I need be ashamed on, and your son is a most brutal, ill-tempered man, and I'm exceeding glad that I have nothing more to say to him."

Lady Emily, seeing that matters were likely to come to a still worse understanding between the parties if they remained longer together under the present excitement of their feelings, desired Rose to leave her alone with her parents and Ambrose's father. "My good friends," she said, as soon as Rose had retired, "we should at all times be merciful to each other, as we hope for mercy, and not aggravate each other's faults: if any body is more to blame in this affair than another, as far as I can see, it is Mr. Carlton. Rose is very young, and vain of her beauty; her head has been turned perhaps for the moment, but let us hope that what has occurred will be a lesson to her: I grieve that she should be so humbled; yet her mortification, properly felt, may turn out a blessing: and when the sting of the reproof and humiliation she has undergone wears away, she will, I am sure, reflect and become sensible of the value of Ambrose's affection, and the worthlessness of the admiration excited merely by her pretty face."

"May be so," said farmer Philips, "but your Ladyship cannot suppose as how I should ever let Ambrose take her to wife."

"Why not, Mr. Philips? a moment's error on Rose's part will not destroy your son's affection for her, nor can it have undermined her's for him; if you decide thus harshly in the first impulse of your anger, you will repent having done so when it is too late: you have too good a heart, I know, to witness misery in others, which a little forbearance on your part could have saved them, and not feel sorry."

"Very like, my Lady, very like," said the sturdy old man; "but Ambrose's mother was a good woman, and so was my mother, and so was her mother before her; we have all come of respectable parents, from father to son, and I can't, no, I can't bear the thoughts that Ambrose should disgrace us all at last by marrying——. I be sorry for you, neighbour Andrew," continued the farmer, suddenly

ecking himself, "and I will not say the word uppermost on my s, though I am afraid, my Lady, I loses all hopes of your inte- st for my poor boy as to getting him out of prison, which a while go I was thinking of asking; but Nathan Philips was always a lain spoken man, and so, once more, there's an end on't, my Lady."

Farmer Philips moved towards the door to go. "I be sorry for ou," he said, stopping on the threshold, and turning to Andrew —"I be sorry for you," and tendering him his hand; but the latter drew back,—"No, Philips, you have taunted me with my cala- mity, you have heaped shame on my face, and I cannot take you by the hand."

"Good heavens!" said Emily, alarmed; "this is too cruel a business. Forgive each other: consider the youth of Rose; the temptation she may have been exposed to; the want of any the slightest proof of actual guilt; and then the future misery of your son, when he finds Rose is lost to him for ever! Consider this, good Mr. Philips: think were she *your* daughter!"

"My Lady, you are a good lady, and every body ought to attend to your advice: and I hope I shall; but not now." And as if afraid to listen farther to her appeal, he abruptly quitted the cottage.

Having endeavoured, though she feared in vain, to speak peace to this distressed family, Lady Emily now returned as quickly as possible to the Hall, revolving how she might best obtain the liberation of Ambrose Philips from gaol: for this purpose, she sought Colonel Pennington, whom she had known from a child, and in whose warm and active spirit she ever met a kind coadjutor in all her little plans for the good of others. She found him in the garden watching a community of bees, and as much interested in the wonderful instinct implanted in these little insects, as though the business of his life were that of a comtemplative philosopher. He called her to observe with him some of the manœuvres of that winged tribe,—"Come and learn," he said, "even of these, some of that wisdom which God teaches us in all his works."

"O dear Colonel," said Emily, a little impatiently, "this is not the moment when I can enter into such speculations. At another time I could take delight in them; but I have something on my mind which calls for immediate attention, and leaves no place for other thoughts." She then passed her arm through his, and, as she led him slowly towards the house, related the scene she had witnessed at Delvin's cottage.

"I dread the consequences that may ensue," she added: "what with Rose's excited temper, who feels or fancies herself wronged, and the fury of old Philips, and the wretchedness of her parents, unless something is done to liberate Ambrose from prison, and to marry the young couple immediately, I fear they will never come together; and then her reputation as a good and virtuous girl is gone for ever! Do, dear Colonel, do go, and seek to procure the instant liberation of Ambrose. You, who are so good, will feel happy to be the means of restoring peace to this distracted family—pray, I beseech you to go directly."

"What is all this praying and beseeching about?" questioned General Montgomery; who at that moment joined them. "What in the world," said he, with his own benevolent smile, "are you so eagerly talking about; as if life and death depended upon it, Emily?"

"And so they do," she replied; and passing her arm through the General's, as she had already done through Colonel Pennington's, she looked, with her beaming expression of lively interest, alternately in their countenances, telling her story rapidly over again; and beseeching them to save Rose Delvin, by using their influence to marry her directly to Ambrose.

"But, hear me, Emily! hear me, my dear, impetuous love! you forget, in your anxiety to do good, that the thing is impossible. Philips must undergo the course of the law: I fear he is charged with an offence which may turn out to be serious; and for which, at all events, he must stand his trial."

"Well, at all events," said Lady Emily, "I must know how Mr. Carlton is. Do pray, dear uncle, ask Colonel Pennington to go over to the Manor-house to-day, and we shall hear the truth from him."

"It shall be done, dearest," said the General; "every thing shall be done: only do not make yourself too anxious. I am sure you never wish any thing that is not reasonable and right; and I heartily desire that you may not be disappointed in this affair of Rose—I desire it, indeed, on all accounts."

Lady Emily was obliged for the moment to be content with the promise of her uncle, for she had observed in his calm steady manner, when speaking on the subject, that his mind was already made up upon it. The party proceeded, therefore, in silence towards the Hall, and, entering the breakfast-room, found all its inmates assembled. "Well, Emily," cried Lady Frances, "I think you must *be pretty well fatigued* after having been up half the night."

"Oh! very true," she cried, "but I had quite forgotten that."

Lady Emily was one of those persons who *did* forget *self* when the interest of others was concerned. "I had forgotten that, and now you mention it, I do feel rather tired; but, dear uncle, I must tell you I never will sleep in King Charles's room again,—indeed, I cannot. I had such dreadful dreams, it makes me shudder but to think of them. Besides, what is still more dreadful, I saw a figure gliding about the room."

"What is all this, child?" asked the General. Lady Frances, who seldom gave herself the trouble to speak when any body would do it for her, though she had been unfeignedly alarmed at the events of the past night, and was by no means disposed to let them pass by in silence, looked at her sister, as much as to say, "Do you tell the story." And Lady Emily accordingly related how they had been disturbed; and wound up the whole history by saying, half seriously, "I do really think that some misfortune is about to befall the family,—that is what you would think in Scotland, Albinia, is it not?"

"Dinna be boding mischief," replied Miss Macalpine, "dinna speak o' thae freits at a'."

"It would be a misfortune, indeed," rejoined Lady Frances, "if the plate were stolen, or the house haunted; but it is, doubtless, some of the gipsies who infest the neighbourhood, and who cause these nightly disturbances."

"Very true; for when it is coupled with the Colonel's story of the other night, it must be confessed it looks a little suspicious; though, had not you, Frances, been a witness in the business, I should have supposed Emily's imagination had conjured up the figure: however, I will cite Corrie Lovel before me, who is head of the gipsies, now in the neighbourhood; we shall hear what he has to say to it; and if, after speaking to him, these apparitions are not laid, we must take other means to banish them. As to Corrie himself, I do not believe that any thing would induce him to rob me even of a straw; but some of his gang may not be so scrupulous: by the way, that man is an extraordinary being; about forty years ago I saved his life, and he has never forgotten it. During the American war, when we were encamped near Boston, he was taken, and though it afterwards proved a groundless suspicion, was near being hung for a spy. I believed him, from his own account at the time, to be innocent; and, pitying the poor lad, who was then little more than seventeen, I used all my influence at head-

quarters, and obtained his life. Many times since, in various countries, it has occurred to me to meet with him; and generally, since I have resided at this place, he has paid me a visit once a year. I have, hitherto, never had a complaint to make either against him or his people; but I do not like these recent ghost-stories, I confess. I do not suspect any of my own servants, neither do I suspect Corrie himself; but I do suspect some of his attendants; and I shall give him a hint to be off, or to keep his subjects in better order."

"Yes," observed Colonel Pennington, "the gipsies are more under subjection to their chief than is imagined: they are a very wonderful race. I have taken some pains to make myself intimate with their peculiarities; and as they are scattered over the face of the whole habitable globe, I have, in all my wanderings, had opportunities of observing them. Though their different tribes all appear to have distinct languages, and as many distinct religions (as far as they profess any), each approaching more or less to the language and religion of the people among whom they sojourn; yet, this adoption of language and religious opinions arises, I am inclined to think, from motives of policy merely, as they have in fact a language, if not a peculiar worship, of their own. Ask them to tell you what language they speak, and they reply in gibberish; but this is only to evade inquiry; for a very little attention and habit will soon enable any one to distinguish their common parlance with the natives from their regular and unmixed discourse amongst themselves. They are also full of peculiarities. I remember that the gipsies in Hungary have the greatest passion for any thing shining or glittering, however worthless in itself: this propensity is, to be sure, common to all ignorant and barbarous races; indeed, it may be said to be inherent to human nature—to the weaker part, at least, for we remark it in women and children;" turning, as he spoke, to Lady Emily.

"Nay, no harsh reflections, dear Colonel!" exclaimed Lady Emily, "or we shall not listen to you."

"You are truly an exception;" laying his rough hand on her arm, as he continued: "It must be said in favour of their taste, however, that the Hungarian gipsies now and then show a partiality for shining substances of sterling value—gold and silver plate, for instance—which they hesitate not to purloin when occasion offers; and of this, with jewels, and other ornaments of price, each family *of a tribe have* generally a sacred store handed down from one ge-

ration to another, which is preserved as a precious inheritance alienable under whatever reverses of distress or poverty. Alough it is difficult to ascertain what mode of worship they follow, e Hungarian gipsies have a translation of the Lord's Prayer, in eir own tongue. And as far as my own observations can warrant e remark, I think them in general a harmless, wandering race; but is a lamentable consideration, that so numerous a body of people ould be suffered to exist without any systematic attempt at ameorating their condition. In Hungary, prejudice is strongly against hem, and the belief is current that they are cannibals. It may be, owever, and most probably is, without foundation, for I cannot magine—"

The entrance of a servant here broke off the Colonel's account of he gipsy tribes, or, with his propensity to dwell on any subject that he had once undertaken, there is no saying to what length he might have led his auditors in the discussion. "Farmer Philips, Sir," said the servant, to General Montgomery, "presents his duty, and begs to say a few words, if you will be pleased to see him."

"Philips!" said the General, as if at a loss for the reason of this request; "why, what does *he* want? Oh! I know. Well, show Farmer Philips into my room; I will speak to him directly." General Montgomery remained for a moment silent, then rose and walked towards the door which led to his study; Lady Emily, whose eyes had been fixed on his countenance from the instant she had caught the name of the person inquiring for her uncle, followed, and taking him affectionately by the hand, said, "Dearest uncle, pray do all you can for Ambrose, and for the poor Delvins."

"I will do all that I can, dear," said the General, kissing her forehead; and he hastily left the room. Lady Emily walked to the window, to hide the emotion which the renewal of this painful subject had caused her, and waited long in anxious expectation of the General's return. He came not, however; and when they met he was silent, and she failed not to augur confirmation of her worse fears from this unusual mystery.

CHAPTER VIII.

I lent my back unto an aik,
I thought it was a trusty tree;
But first it bowed, and syne it brak,
Sae my fause luve's forsaken me. OLD BALLAD.

"Do any of you wish to see my friend, Corrie Lovel?" said General Montgomery, as he half-opened the library-door, and perceived the family party assembled there; "he is in the court-yard in his carriage, and I am going to speak to him."

"Oh! yes, I will go," said Lady Emily: and every body prepared to follow the General, except Lady Frances.

"In his carriage, indeed! My uncle really humours those people too much; at least, if there is any thing worth seeing, we can see it from the window:" and Lady Frances placed herself in a *fauteuil* by the open casement. The room, however, was soon deserted by all but herself; and as she sat with her head languidly resting on her beautifully turned arm, she perceived the party, Lord Mowbray among the rest, supporting Lady Emily, as they stood on the steps of the entrance. She saw them wait with impatience and interest, while General Montgomery beckoned Corrie Lovel to draw nearer to them.

The appearance of the old man was calculated to arrest attention. Seated in a sort of cart drawn by donkeys, and conducted by his grandchild Lushee, he looked the chieftain of his wandering tribe: a silvery beard reached almost to his waist; his head was bald, and of a shining whiteness, contrasted with the olive tint of his face: his small piercing eyes, overhung by full shaggy eyebrows, glanced brightly; and the keenness of their expression would have indicated an absence of all truth and integrity in the character, had not a redeeming expression of open frankness played about the mouth and forehead. His dress, in its way, was as remarkable as his physiognomy:—a shallow-crowned hat was lowered in his hand as he approached the company; it had been black, but was become brown with time and weather; its shape, originally triangular, was now beyond definition, and the golden honours which had formerly graced its border, preserved no relic of their former lustre. The *button-loop*, which had been wont to shine so brilliantly in front,

ow scarcely restrained the five black cock feathers, placed cross-wise, in mock distinction of the wearer's authority. His neck, the noble column on which Nature's great Architect has placed the head of man, exalting his physical as well as moral vision by the gifts bestowed upon him, was bare and open, save that a ribbon loosely confined the collar of his snow-white shirt. He wore no waistcoat, nor none was visible; but a stripe of some dingy scarlet vestment marked the line in front, down the breast of a coarse covering of brown sheepskin, that served him for a coat, and appeared to have undergone little transformation from the original fashion which it had worn on the back of its first bleating owner, for it loosely enveloped the body only down to the waist; was without sleeves, and was confined by a strong girdle of leather, and a large silver buckle of antique form. His arms were clad in the undressed skins of some animal, apparently the deer, and fitted nearly to the shape, reaching, however, but little below the elbow, where the linen was seen again in its brilliant whiteness, and opposed itself to his dark-toned skin, like a picture of the Italian school, where white is rejected in the carnation, and employed only where the object really is white. Lord Mowbray was struck with it; for it brought back to his mind, scenes, where every common beggar in the streets looks like a figure stepped out from one of the impressive and deep-coloured works of Sebastian del Piombo or Guercino.

Corrie Lovel, besides this body covering, wore a large wrapping cloak, somewhat resembling the Spanish in its fashion, hanging from his shoulders, apparently to be closed or thrown back, as occasion required; its texture showed the service it had done; and, as he threw it from him when descending from his vehicle to make obeisance to the party, the large clasp that attached it caught General Montgomery's eye, and he exclaimed—"Well, Corrie, I see that the token of times past is still in existence, and I hope you need never be driven to seek its value by its weight."

"It must go hard with Corrie Lovel, honoured General, before he parts with what he values next to life itself."

"Why man, you won it, and may wear it proudly; but had you followed the career it opened to you at the time, you had been better off now."

The facts connected with the clasp in question were associated with a circumstance already alluded to by General Montgomery, after the eventful escape of Corrie from a halter. He had devoted himself for some time to the service of his benefactor, under an im-

pression that, in that scene of danger, opportunity might be afforded to render back the debt he had incurred. With this impression, he solicited the General, then a young aid-de-camp, to remain with him as one of his attendants, and followed him to the field on all occasions. In a particular instance, he was eminently successful:—they had been surprised by a recruiting party, and nearly overwhelmed by superior numbers; the General's horse was wounded, and, to save him, Corrie had given up his own, and engaged hand to hand with an officer of the American troops, whom he overcame, and the cloak and clasp which he now wore had been the spoils of his fallen enemy. The daring and intrepidity he displayed on this and other occasions were so great, that a very favourable idea began to be entertained of him, and his patron would have found little difficulty in promoting his interests as a soldier; but no inducement beyond gratitude could ever prevail on Corrie to continue in the service; and when the General returned, on the conclusion of the war, to England, his attendant quitted him; but he remained ever after, as circumstances proved, gratefully alive to the remembrance of what he owed his benefactor.

Corrie Lovel now stood on his feet before the party. "How are you?" said General Montgomery; "I am sorry to see you not quite so active as when our acquaintance first began."

"Ay, honoured Sir, youth cannot be staid, and I know not that I would go back for mine, were it in my power to do so."

"There is hardly any thing that I know which is worth the trouble of going back for," said Lord Mowbray to Lady Emily, "not even youth; but if it would always last as it is, it would be pleasant enough."

"Oh, yes," she replied, gaily, "I am so very happy, I desire no change; I do not conceive how I could be happier than at the present moment, only for poor Rose."

"*You* are very young, indeed," was Lord Mowbray's reply, looking at her doubtingly, as if he knew not whether she spoke really in the innocence of heart. If he had looked at her again, as she turned with the simplicity of youthful enthusiasm to listen while Corrie Lovel continued speaking to the General, Lord Mowbray would have acquitted her of all affectation; but her sister had spoken from the window above, and he was engaged in replying to her; for, spite of his better judgment, Lady Frances never addressed him without fascinating his attention.

General Montgomery continued talking to Lovel, and at length

said, "I have a question or two to put to you, Corrie, which you must answer on your allegiance."

"Your servant is ready to answer," was the prompt reply: and it would have been difficult for the keenest cross-questioner in a court of justice to have discovered, in the features of the party addressed, the slightest symptom of anxiety at this approaching examination, or the smallest variation in the fixed gaze which he turned on the general, while he awaited his interrogatories.

The General proceeded. "Do you hold yourself responsible, Corrie, for all the people in your company? are they all honest?" Corrie started at the word honest, and paused; then said, "I will be responsible, General, that none of mine shall ever harm or intrude upon what is yours. But, honoured Sir, wrong me not by half words and doubts, for I owe you everlasting gratitude; if you have suffered loss or cross from any of my people, tell me" (and Corrie Lovel raised his hand, and his features bespoke all the vehemence of indignation); "for redress you shall have, and vengeance shall fall on the guilty."

"My good Lovel, I do not doubt *you*, and I may wrong those about you; but circumstances have occurred, and my own servants are too trusty and too attached, I am willing to believe, for me to suspect them, to render inquiry necessary. I speak to you without attaching, for an instant, any suspicion to yourself, because I know you well; but in the best ordered societies rogues sometimes will gain admittance, and it may be—here, step aside that I may speak to you apart:" (and Corrie followed General Montgomery as he moved towards the end of the flight of steps)—"it may be some of your followers are to blame." They continued talking for some time alone; and Emily, meanwhile, with Colonel Pennington and Miss Macalpine, were amused with the little Lushee's vivacity, who had always a ready answer to their questions.

At length Lady Emily, who had conquered the alarm she had felt on first seeing Corrie Lovel, held out her hand to Lushee, and said, "Come, tell my fortune, Lushee. I promised, some days ago, that you should do so:" alluding to her meeting them in her morning's walk with Rose.

Lushee sprang forward, but not before she had directed her quick glance towards her grandfather, who still remained in conversation with the General; and at the same time, in a sharp, shrill voice, which made Colonel Pennington start, as if he recognized in it something familiar to his ear, she uttered the following words:—"Ick—

dwi—try—schtar;" and and spreading open the fingers of both her hands, seemed waiting for his answer. Corrie answered the youthful sibyl in the same unintelligible gibberish, in an under voice.

Before Lushee approached, however, to perform her task of palmistry, she first wiped her hand on her shabby garments, then held it out to take the fair hand of Lady Emily; but her arm, dark as it was, might have disputed the superiority; for in hands, as in countenances, colour is the least part of beauty, and the long slender fingers and acorn-shaped nails of Lushee's tiny hand, rendered it beautiful of its kind; nor was she, it may be presumed, wholly unconscious of this charm. "Now, lady," said she, "let me see the lines on that pretty palm at leisure; do not be in such haste as the last time, for I have a deal to say, lady; but," (speaking to Lord Mowbray, who had turned from Lady Frances to observe what was passing) "if you please, young gentleman, keep away—for all things are not for your hearing, you know. There, now, lady love, I see that by this line which crosses that one, you will have a journey, and very soon; it will give you much pain, but some pleasure too, for here is the line of life sweetly interwoven with a mazy thread of blue veins; they are the pleasures and fountains of life which give joy and peace. Do you take me, sweet lady? Now, be heedful, and mark Lushee's words, and do not look about you, nor at the young lord there: for though, true, he be so tall, so handsome, so courtly, you must not let your fancy wander there. He'll but deceive thee, and leave thee to tears and sorrow," continued the little prophetess, in a half-whisper to Emily, who began to be evidently distressed. "He has won many hearts, and all as easily as Lushee gathers nuts, and has cracked them as easily too:" (here her penetrating gaze was directed full on the young lord.) "Now, look, lady, please to look in my face, and tell me if Lushee has not said a true word; hast not set thy fancy on one who has not set his fancy on thee? Isn't it as Lushee tells thee?"

"No, indeed," said Lady Emily, very innocently; "I have set my heart on nobody yet."

"Hast not?" said Lushee, quite put out in her story by this simple answer, which she had wit enough to know must be true, by the seal of sincerity which it bore: when pausing again, she took up another thread of her story. "Thou needest be very watchful, not only for thyself but others; there are those anigh thee would work *thee harm!* Look to thyself, sweet lady! and, above all, look to *those thou lovest most*, for danger is hovering round them; and you

bird which I see in mid-air, carries a sword and digs graves for the unburied dead! Thou lookest pale and tremblest! why dost thou?" and the penetrating glance which the girl gave her, combined with her words of fearful import, caused Lady Emily to shudder involuntarily as she retreated from Lushee.

"Nay! yet stop awhile, lady! There are three things I must warn thee against:—love, poverty, and stratagem!"

"The first two things," answered Lady Emily, "I know nothing about; and the latter reminds me, Lushee, to leave you to exercise your eloquence and your art upon others!"

"How, Reyena! how? Lushee has no stratagems; she does not deceive thee! no, no! but dost not *thou* deceive Lushee? Thy heart is it really fixed on no one yet?"

"Not in the sense you mean, Lushee! But no wonder you tell fortunes, when you make every one tell their secrets to you; I am tired of hearing mine: let me hear what you will predict for some one else? Colonel Pennington, come! tempt the oracle to declare your future prospects!"

"My dear Lady Emily!" replied the Colonel, "my fortunes in life are pretty much settled; and I would not know what is before me for all the world's wealth put together, even if it were in the walnut-dyed gipsy's power to look into the book of Fate! (which I suspect is not the case) as far as regards the next coming five minutes."

"Well then, Alpinia! do you hear what Lushee can gather from her art in regard to me."

"Deed no, not I, Lady Emily!" said Miss Macalpine, "I am no' disputing the gipsy-body's skill: but my lot in life is cast! the *past* has taen a' frae me, the future can gie me nathing! But here is my Lord Mowbray—why do you not call upon him?"

Lord Mowbray, attracted by the voice of Miss Macalpine uttering his name, had turned round to where Lady Emily and her party and Lushee were standing; and they all called upon him, as a proper object for the gipsy's talent of divination. "If she tells me," said his Lordship, "any thing that she knows about me, either of what is past, or what is, or what is to be, she will not only amuse but astonish me; for I know nothing at all about myself, except that it seems very extraordinary why I am here to be so informed."

"Ah! my Lord," answered Lushee, with one of her archest looks, and holding up her long taper finger—"ah! my Lord, thou knowest *well enough thou shouldst* not have been here and have left a

heart aching for thee elsewhere! now thou wouldst make other hearts to ache. But the day will come when things will be reversed, and thou'lt never wed the lady thou thinkest to wed!"

"Who the deuce is she?" interrupted Lord Mowbray.

Lushee went on: "But thou'lt be a sorrowful man yet! a sinful one thou art. Think upon the gardens of Sorento; think upon the caves on its shores!"

Lord Mowbray, roused for a moment to an eagerness he had never before displayed to those by whom he was surrounded, here uttered a sudden exclamation, and seized the girl's hand, while he looked at her as though he would have dived into her very soul; but Lushee returned his gaze, and her eyes assumed a fiery sparkling brightness as she continued:—"If the stars tell me these things, why, noble Lord, question my knowledge and my power as thou didst but now, and turnedst me to derision? Thou knowest that I have uttered words that are like daggers to thy heart!"

Lord Mowbray, though evidently startled by what had fallen from the gipsy, made an effort to be calm. "In the multiplicity of nonsense the girl talks, it is no marvel that she stumbles accidentally on what gives pain or pleasure!" said he, as he turned to Lady Emily; and then seemed to relapse into his usual *nonchalance* of manner, as he added, "but it matters not, you may talk, child!"

Lushee laughed: "I believe I have talked more than enough, already; and will not add to my words, save to remind thee, Lord, that, though the eagle's nest be high, the winds of heaven are higher still, and may hurl it low; and to warn thee, that thou lingerest not here! Away, noble Lord! away! loiter not in indolence! Blush, since poor Lushee can reprove thy inactivity."

"To tell me of my indolence and inactivity requires no conjuror," replied Lord Mowbray, with a forced smile; "here—here is silver for you!" and he walked away, nearer to the window where Lady Frances sat. "I have been paying a great deal of money, Lady Frances; and what do you think it is for? to be told that 'I pass my life in doing nothing!'"

Lushee had followed Lord Mowbray, and was beginning to speak: "Get along! go, go!" said he angrily, "and learn your trade better!"

"Thou art no judge how well I know my trade, proud Lord! but some day or other perhaps thou mayest remember Lushee's words; there are many ways of deceiving—thou'lt learn that to thy cost."

"Away with you, child!" cried Lord Mowbray peevishly, as he *rew her another* crown; "begone."

"She is an amusing little black-eyed thing," said Colonel Pennington; "it is quite pitiable to see such a child in the ways of destruction."

"Puir bit lassie!" said Miss Macalpine, "it makes me wae to see sic an a bonnie bairn sae ill guided; she'll no be a well doing; I fear, you——"

"Guided!" repeated Lord Mowbray, who misunderstood her Scotch dialect: "I should never have imagined she was guided at all."

General Montgomery now approached the group; and Lushee Lovel ran to her grandfather, and appeared to be whispering in his ear an account of her proceedings with Lady Emily, and her warning to Lord Mowbray. The old man broke off from her, saying with an air of command, "Tshib, Tshib!" and, approaching within a respectful distance, seemed to wish to speak again with the General.

"Well, have you any thing more to say?" asked General Montgomery, as he observed him still lingering ere he departed!—"what is it?"

"Honoured Sir! in the press of other matters, I had forgotten a boon I would fain ask: there are certain sheep of your's have died in the western pasture, there; and your people know not what to make of them. Eat them they will not, and to bury them they are afraid, for the dogs will harrow them up again. Give them, General, if it please you, to Corrie; they'll serve him and his people for a feast. I might have taken them, or have bought them for the carrying them away, but Corrie knows his duty too well to touch aught of your's save with especial leave; not a bit of wool would be disturbed from off their backs, but with your consent, honoured General, by me or mine."

Corrie Lovel waited for his answer, while General Montgomery looked around with astonishment.—"Why, Lovel, the sheep, if dead, as you say, are your's; and I shall thank you, as my people will too, for their removal; but in truth we ourselves are fearful in such cases how to dispose of them, lest their disease should spread. But are you in earnest, man? You will not eat of them, surely, unless you lack other food indeed, and then ——"

"We think not that which God kills is unclean," replied Lovel, "and we love the flesh that bleeds not by the knife." A feeling of horror appeared to pervade the whole party as Corrie Lovel urged his request; and General Montgomery, putting a piece of gold into

his hand as he ascended the steps, recommended him to provide a festival for his people with it, rather than from that which he proposed.

Lady Emily, as she re-entered the hall, felt her spirits depressed; and though her natural good sense rejected the idea of attaching importance to any mysterious words that had fallen from Lushee, yet their import left an uncomfortable impression on her mind, and she wished more than once that she had remained with Frances in the library. The idea of Rose, and the misery of her family, again recurred to her; and she determined to visit their cottage, though with faint hopes of finding its inmates more at peace than she had left them.

With this intention, instead of following the party back to the library, Emily equipped herself for her walk; and hastening through the garden, and across the chase, soon reached the objects of her anxiety. Her worst fears were but confirmed by what she learnt from the Delvins; Rose was not at home; but her wretched parents represented her as remaining still the same unmoved and hard creature that she had shown herself since the first of this miserable affair; and the old couple assured Lady Emily that it required their utmost forbearance, and the strongest recollection that she was their child, to withhold them from turning her into the street.

Their agony of tears, when speaking of the rebellious and ungrateful Rose, was more than Emily could bear; and taking the old woman's hand and pressing it kindly, she rushed from their cottage little less agitated than themselves. "Tell Rose," she said as she left them,—"tell Rose, I desire her to come to me at the hall to-morrow morning at ten o'clock: I must see her."

With a slow and pensive step, and a heavy heart, Lady Emily trod her way home. For the heart of Emily was sensibly alive to the joys or the sorrows of humanity; the tenderness of her nature, unseared and uncontaminated by the world, led her readily to participate in the weal, or to sympathise in the woe of her fellow creatures; and she could become the ministering angel, or the blithe companion, as occasion demanded:—ever prompt to dispense comfort or promote happiness in others, herself the happiest in proportion as she was the means of diffusing contentment around her.

As she ascended the terrace-steps, she observed General Montgomery in close conversation with Mr. Aldget; and her own anxiety led her to conclude they were occupied about the release of young Philips from prison. Her uncle's agents had left the Hall already two days, and their business had been completed; what, therefore,

had brought Mr. Aldget back? and the subject of their conversation was one of interest, by the earnestness of their manner.

While doubtful whether to approach, the General perceived her at a distance; and calling to her in his fondest tone, he said, "Emily; dearest Emily, come hither; I have something to tell you which will give you pleasure." Lady Emily bounded forward as he spoke, and her heart leapt with as quick a motion almost, as her steps flew towards him. "What! dearest uncle! what? Oh, tell me."

"Why, dearest, Mr. Carlton has caused bail to be put in for Ambrose Philips, and he is liberated. Mr. Aldget saw him set at liberty early this morning; and Mr. Carlton, he assures us, will take no farther notice of the matter, and will not appear against him. There, Emily, are you not happy?"

"Yes, dearest uncle," flinging herself into his arms and kissing his cheek. "Oh! yes, I am truly happy—now all will be well, and Rose must marry directly. I will go—"

"Stop! dear Emily; surely you will inquire for Mr. Carlton, who has behaved so liberally, so nobly, on this occasion?"

"Oh, surely," replied Lady Emily, "I feel so very grateful to Mr. Carlton for what he has done. I hope, Mr. Aldget, that Mr. Carlton does not continue in any danger, or to suffer much."

"I thank you, my Lady; I trust I may say that he is out of danger, but he is still suffering from this sad affair; and my friend Drench, who has attended him, says it will be a long time before he is quite himself—that he must take great care; indeed, Lady Emily, it is a noble instance of greatness of mind, his releasing that fellow; for as I sat by his bedside, receiving his orders to that effect, I saw what pain he suffered; and Surgeon Drench came in at the moment, and said, 'You must not exert yourself, or I cannot answer for the consequence, Mr. Carlton;'—and Mr. Carlton was all in an agitation, Lady Emily, and said to me, 'Mr. Aldget,' no! he called me Aldget—'Aldget,' says he, 'this poor fellow must not remain in prison; and if any difficulties occur, remember you have my orders to offer bail to any amount.' Could there be more generosity, ma'am, than this?" continued the loquacious attorney: but Lady Emily listened to his harangue with impatience, for her thoughts were elsewhere, and her opinion of the Honourable Mr. Carlton's motives, perhaps, a little at variance with the impression which his humble servant and lawyer intended to convey.

Meanwhile, she was endeavouring to retreat from the subject, and to avoid all reply to it, when General Montgomery said, "Well,

Emily, you are very happy, I see, at this information : where are you going now?" Emily stopped, and was hesitating. "Oh! I know where you would go, dearest; but you must not over-exert and fatigue yourself. I will send word to the Delvins. You already look pale and harassed, and remember to-morrow is the ball, and I cannot have you look ill at the good Fitzhammond's festival. Go to your room, dearest, and keep quiet. Good news spreads fast, and the Delvins will hear of Ambrose's release; doubtless, before you could reach their cottage : to be sure, he will go thither himself the first thing; and at such a moment you would only be in the way."

Lady Emily was obliged to yield a reluctant consent to her uncle's wishes; when, kissing his extended hand, and curtseying to Mr. Aldget, she withdrew.

Although Emily's wishes, had they been uncontrolled, would have led her to seek the Delvins in their cottage, and to have been the first to communicate the happy tidings, she felt a joy in the assurance that the event would not fail to reach them, and that it must be productive of the happiest consequences. Already in idea she saw Rose and Ambrose, the mutual pride of their parents, reconciled and united; and she beheld them established in their neat and comfortable cottage, the pattern of their native village, industrious and prosperous: and she pleased herself with the thought, that on the morrow, when Rose hastened to her with the news, she should accompany her back to congratulate the good old Delvin and his wife, on this happy termination of all their sorrow. Alas! the youthful heart looks not beyond the present moment, and the felicity it expects is eagerly and too securely called its own. Lady Emily little knew what a sad reverse to her hopes the morrow would produce!

The first use Ambrose made of his liberty, as soon as he could steal away from his father, whose anger against Rose, whatever displeasure he felt himself against her, he could not bear to witness in another, was to fly to her dwelling to obtain an explanation of her conduct, which, he doubted not, would be as satisfactory and as efficacious in allaying his father's wrath, as in dispelling his own suspicions. His liberation from prison, although owing it to Mr. Carlton, detracted from its value; his ardent and honest wish to account to Rose for the violence of his conduct on the morning of their last unfortunate meeting, although indeed the circumstances attendant upon it fully justified him—all flushed his heart with joy and anxiety.

The sun was shining unobscured by a cloud, the birds singing from every flowery spray, and the fresh herbage, springing from every clod, beautified the earth. It requires refinement to speak of these things, but none to feel them: they are given by God to all his creatures alike, for their delight and their advantage; and many a gentle heart resides under a rustic garb, which does enjoy and is grateful for them, and such was that of Ambrose.

As he stepped along Love-lane, the well-known resort of all village lovers, he came suddenly up to her whom he was seeking; she was walking slowly, with her eyes upon the ground, and sweeping the earth with a bunch of May-flowers she held in one hand. "Rose! dear Rose! do you not know me? I am Ambrose, your own Ambrose."

"Bless me, why who'd have thought to have seen you here? I thought you'd been in gaol."

"Well, Rose, that's not over and above kind, methinks, to remind a man of his misfortunes, and the more's the cruelty of it, when you consider how I got there. Why, Rose! are ye not glad to see me? if that's the case, I wish with all my heart I was back there again."

"Why really, Mr. Philips, you took me so by surprise, I don't know what to say!"

"Mr. Philips! why Rose," and he looked in her face, "are you *my* Rose? now don't call me *Mister!* I had rather ye knocked my head with a stone, that I would! I did not think, not I, as how you could treat a poor lad so! and one to whom you are betrothed!"

"Why, I wonder," returned the heartless girl, "what you could expect, after the ungenteel manner in which you behaved yourself to a gentleman with whom I was walking."

"He a gentleman! a pretty gentleman, truly! why, I wonder, Rose, to hear you talk so! I never had thought to have seen the day! never. I wonder you are not ashamed of yourself; and if you comes to that, Miss Rose, why what business had you to be walking with him, or any man?"

"And pray, Mr. Philips, what's your business who I walk with? I suppose I may walk with who I choose, and talk too, and hold *flirtations* too, as my mother calls it, if I choose; and no obligation neither to ask your leave that I know of!"

"Why, Rose, you quite astound me! as a body may say; why isn't you and I as good as wedded man and wife? haven't we exchanged tokens? broke our bit of silver together? and many 's the

time, in this sweet lane, have we not swore to be true till death! and haven't our fathers and yourn good mother blessed us? and can ye now say I have no right to know what made you keep company with that fine Squire?"

"You have no right, Mr. Philips, but what I choose to give you, and I don't know, after what has happened, that I shall choose to see you never no more!"

"Not me! not see me never no more! Well now, Rose, you have done it! Oh father! father!" clenching his two hands and striking his breast: "you were right then, after all! she is a worthless one! and my heart is all turned to stone. Rose, give me your hand?" (she suffered him to take it.) "A short time agone, do ye see, I shouldn't have given up this hand to the King on his throne! and that I wouldn't, but for why? Why, because I thought you had given it to me with a true heart and an honest will; but now —now that I know you, rotten at the core, like bad fruit with a fair outside, I wouldn't take it, no! not if you were Queen, and courted me!" and he flung her hand from him.

Rose affected to laugh, and sang as she turned away, Oh, ho! Mr. Jackanapes:—

'But I'll make as light of he
As he made of me;
And I'll be his love no longer,
So farewell he.'"

"One word more, Rose!" and his voice trembled as he spoke: "when you come to a bad end, as the end of such as you will be! —bethink thee then of him who would have cherished and loved thee in youth and age; and with whom thou couldst have lived in respectable wedlock: and then look to thy state—despised and trodden down. Oh Rose, even now, I almost weep for thee! Go! go thy ways, unhappy, wicked Rose!"

Here they were startled by the sound of music, and a small party of soldiers were seen advancing: the little spruce drummer marched fiercely before the sergeant and his men; while the merry fife sounded its light shrill voice to make men think that war is a gay pageant, and foolish maidens conceive that it is a pleasant pastime to follow a soldier's fortunes. The recruiting sergeant and his party—for it was indeed no less—now actually crossed the foot of the lane where Ambrose had been left alone by his fickle mistress; and it is no shame to his manhood to declare, that he had wept out his sorrow in an agony of bitter tears. These gay sounds, the

sight of the brilliant regimentals, the clamour of the village-throng hurraing in thoughtless, ignorant admiration, awoke a sudden sentiment, hitherto unknown in the breast of the forsaken Ambrose.

"Dang it," he said, "I have been insulted, braved by a man who's above me in life, and below me in heart; I have been put in prison by him"—and he ground his teeth together—"for defending one, who—ay, that's the worst on't,—a worthless, wanton jade, whom I did so love—whom I do so love—Oh! oh!" and he burst out afresh into loud sobbing.—"No, I'll go for a soldier, and serve my king and country; and if a bullet goes through my heart, so much the better: for Rose, yes Rose, has broken it. But I'll be a man—yes, I'll be a man, so there's an end on't:" and away he went, swinging his arms and striding along till he reached the Wellington public-house, where he found the sergeant and his recruiting-party enjoying a cool tankard with a number of idle clowns standing with open mouths around, listening to the insidious speeches of the man of war. "Come, my brave boys!" he cried; "come and see a little of life; don't stay here, tied to your mammy's apron strings; come and fight for your sovereign, and see the world; it's a pity such fine fellows as you should be stooping all day over a plough or a spade; better list with me. See here's this youngster," (pointing to the drummer) "he's as jolly a little dog as ever handled a drumstick, and in time will do brave service; why, he's as happy a little fellow as is in the land, and that's saying a good deal. Jim's a glorious pickle—a'n't you, Jim?—and you can take off your ale with the best of us."

One or two of the women who had been standing gazing around, now pulled away their young boys; and, lifting their eyes to heaven devoutly prayed, that if such alone were a soldier's life, her precious child might never become one: but the younger and more thoughtless members of the community had different wishes and ideas; and when the sergeant called to one of his men to give them a song, a larger circle again collected round the porch-door of the public-house.

SOLDIER'S SONG.

A Soldier's life's a jolly thing:
He serves his country, serves his king;
And when he 's fought on foreign strand,
Again he comes to British land,
With money in his pockets, boys.
Oh, money gives us many joys:
Good ale, good cheer, and what not, boys?

A draught and pipe that never cloys.
Oh, then we rant, and then we sing
Britannia rule, God bless the King!
With my fal, la, la, brave boys!

There 's money chinking in my purse,
You may go farther and fare worse:
A brimming tankard foaming o'er;
Drain it, my lads, and ask for more.
Here's colours! come, my hearties, say,
Will you not wear them? yea, or nay?
I know your hearts, how brave they be:
I drink to thee, come drink to me.
Oh! thus we'll rant, and thus we'll sing
Britannia rule, God save the King!
With my fal, la, la, brave boys!

A Soldier's life 's the life for me;
Try it and see how gay we be:
Not a care to vex or teaze us,
And no wife to come and seize us.
When with our gay comrades drinking,
We are spared the pains of thinking
What may be our hap to-morrow,
Since to-day we 're free from sorrow.
Come, brave fellows, join our crew!
Will you, my hearty? you, or you?
With my fal, la, la, brave boys!

"I will!" said Ambrose, half-drunk with ale, and wholly stupified with sorrow.

"What! Ambrose Philips leave Rose?" cried many voices.

"Silence, I say! or I will silence you after another sort! am I to be questioned by such as you?"

"What!" said one old man with white hair, and in a tremulous voice, leaning on a stick, "Ambrose leave his old father?"

"Father!" repeated Ambrose, with an agonized look; and staggering to his feet he seemed about to depart, when the sergeant tipped the wink to one of his men, who dashed a glass of spirits into the tankard he handed to him.

"Come, my brave fellow! you will not part without a farewell cup, at least." And now followed story upon story, song upon song, till Ambrose, fired at the confused images of pleasure that the sergeant and the men represented on one hand, and those of pain and disgrace which overwhelmed him on the other, held out his hand to the former, who, putting a guinea into it, which Ambrose unconsciously grasped, declared him enlisted; and the poor victim of disappointed love and intoxication was marched off, between two men of the party, to quarters. There, on the morrow, he woke too late to reason and a sense of his folly; the most wretched wight that dazzling glory and a worthless woman had ever cozened to his own undoing.

CHAPTER IX.

grand pas, c'est un pas irréparable, lorsqu'on déroule tout-à-coup aux iers, les replis cachés d'une relation intime—le jour qui penètre dans le constate et achève les destructions que la nuit enveloppait de ses ombres.
B. CONSTANT.

be remembered that, on quitting Delvin's cottage, Lady l left an injunction with her parents, that Rose should attend : Hall on the following morning; and when, subsequently, ıe acquainted with the circumstances of Ambrose's release on, her desire to see her protégée was considerably in- and the night had been passed by her in forming plans for y union of this once attached couple.

lt, consequently, some disappointment as the hour passed l no summons came to apprize her of Rose's arrival. Break- over; eleven o'clock struck; still she loitered in the morn-, and became every moment more thoughtful. "Why, ve," said General Montgomery, at length observing his ıstraction, "what is the matter?—you are not in spirits." ed, dear uncle," she replied, "I am not out of spirits—I thinking—"

ıking! upon what grave subject, my Emily? Remember, is Mrs. Fitzhammond's ball, and you must put on your ıirits as well as your gayest attire. Tell me, dearest, has ; occurred to make you wear this face of care?"

no, dear uncle, no! only I expected—Rose;—I desired ıme to me this morning, and it is past the time."

: you forgotten, then, what I told you of Mr. Carlton's very ıduct, in regard to Rose's lover? She is taken up, you may with Ambrose. Depend upon it, they are too much oc- ıith each other for her to remember her appointment with

ə Emily could reply, Lady Frances remarked that she really t understand Mr. Carlton's conduct in this affair, though t allow it to be noble—quite singular. "It is the very way," , turning to Lord Mowbray with an assumed softness of —"it is the very way to encourage similar outrages on an- asion; it is quite a mistake, quite a misplaced generosity

in Mr. Carlton to pardon such a man, at least without having first made him smart for his offence. Do you not think so, my Lord?"

"You would, then," replied Lord Mowbray, "were it your case, Lady Frances, hang the man first and try him after?"

"It is most probable," said Emily, who, for the first time, showed any symptom of interest in what was passing—"it is most probable that Mr. Carlton may, on reflection, have thought himself in the wrong, and therefore took this measure as the best means of repairing his error; and he deserves praise for his candour, though I cannot think his conduct either very noble or very singular. All that is left to us, when we find ourselves to blame, is to acknowledge the truth, and make the best reparation in our power."

"Ay, but to acknowledge the truth, when a man is in the wrong, Lady Emily, is as difficult," observed Colonel Pennington, "as to find it out on any ordinary occasion. For truth, they say, lies in a well, and those who look for it there, generally see nothing but the reflection of themselves, together with all their prejudices and passions, and so are not a whit the nearer their object."

"And when you have found it," said Lord Mowbray, "what is it good for? All the pleasures of life lie in its illusions; and the only way to go through the world quietly, is to be content with the surfaces both of things and persons."

"The only way," replied Colonel Pennington, "to avoid being put in a passion, is to avoid silly people; but, as the world is so full of them, that to keep out of their way is impossible, I suppose I am doomed to be in passion to the end of my life!"

Every body laughed at this declaration of the choleric but good-natured Colonel. "I will answer for that," cried General Montgomery, "since the day that you knocked the man overboard in the Mediterranean, and then jumped into the sea to save his life at the risk of your own, when the vessel was running nine knots an hour."

"Yes, I remember it," said Colonel Pennington in his roughest tone. "The fellow deserved to be thrown into the sea, but not to be drowned, at least by me; he loved me, however, all his life after that affair."

"A curious recipe to beget love," said Lord Mowbray; "but it had its admirers, though few imitators, I conclude."

"No, no! nobody admires a man for being in a passion, Mowbray," replied the Colonel; "or for endeavouring to save the life that his passion endangers. It is a bad story—a bad story. I wish

ieral would, just as my friend Miss Macalpine says, '*let by-*
ie byganes.' Let us talk no more about it."
ink it was much to your honour, Colonel," said Miss Mac-
—" one might ken ye had a drap of the true bluid in your

ave remarked," said Lord Mowbray, " that there is some-
xceedingly congenial in Scotch blood with water."
w, my Lord?" said Miss Macalpine.
st, you know, there is a drop of the morning dew, or right
ırentosh, to which I have heard it reported all your country
e particularly addicted; and then I myself saw an instance
ıng lady (one, too, who had never resided in the country of
estors), who, from a sort of instinctive love of water, took
shoes and stockings, and very deliberately forded a rapid
"

Emily, who had once more relapsed into silent thoughtful-
arted at the latter part of Lord Mowbray's speech, and in-
ily looking up, blushed deeply; while Lord Mowbray con-
d with affected gravity:—" Now, I conceive that this very
linary proceeding could only arise from that instinctive love
, which the torrents and perpetual rains, etc. abounding, I
ard, in Scotland, naturally enough produce; and this sup-
seems confirmed by the story of Colonel Pennington's
; into the sea. Do you not agree with me, Lady Emily?"
ılushed yet more deeply, but could not help smiling with
ısness, as she replied, hurriedly, " Really, my Lord, I do
w; I never was in Scotland; why do you refer to me on the
"

ıy, what is the matter, Emily?" said the General; " one
nagine it was yourself whom Lord Mowbray had seen."
I so it was, dear uncle," replied Emily in confusion; " mine
t very pretty exploit."
ı not possible!" cried her sister. " A very pretty exploit, and
pretty confession truly!"
," rejoined Lord Mowbray, with more earnestness of ex-
ı than was usual with him, " it is a very pretty confession;
very body told their peccadillos with the same candour,
ıld be apt to fall in love with follies."
Frances coldly desired to know the solution of the enigma;
ıither party seemed disposed to reply, she turned from them,
ıg with an *expression* that could not be misunderstood,

"that she was now aware why Emily had taken to such stran habits lately."

Lady Emily looked at her sister, but did not trust herself to spe for she felt her heart swell within her breast, while blushes s fused her cheeks, as she reflected on the unjust suspicions whi her sister's words and manner had implied from the first. Lo Mowbray's allusion to the subject had given her pain, and perha too, though unconscious why she did so, she regretted that the s credness of a secret hitherto preserved between them should th have been violated.

There is a charm in the recognition of a secret but innocent i telligence, be the matter ever so trivial, which is indescribably swe but this pure feeling must not, can not, for a moment be confou ed with that fever of vicious excitement, which exists under a circumstances of guilty intrigue: no, it is as different as light fr darkness. It is the delicate consciousness of an interest apart fr the rude realities of life; the ethereal intercourse of minds fin tuned in unison.

In the present instance, Lady Emily had felt indebted to L Mowbray for his silence with respect to her girlish frolic; though he often spoke of pretty feet and ankles as indispensabl beauty, still, though conscious that his remarks extended to hers her individual feet and ankles had not been named; and her blus and a half smile that dimpled around her lips, whenever the sub was alluded to, had made known to him that she tacitly ackn ledged the delicacy of his forbearance to its full extent. The sp however, was now broken; the secret divulged; and Lady Emi confusion was only equalled by Lady Frances's chagrin at detection.

The circumstance affected Lord Mowbray differently: he indeed, regret the disclosure the moment it had passed his lips, for the same reason; but he had never seen Lady Emily t much advantage. He looked at her, as she made her artless c fession of the truth, with a kind of delighted interest, whic had never before felt for any woman; and the good humou Lady Frances was not restored now by the discovery that this the case.

Lady Emily, still distressed at what had occurred, and rest at the non-appearance of Rose, had risen to leave the room, w as she reached the door, she was met by Mr. Aldget, who, bo as he passed her, stepped forward with eager haste. "I b

excellent news of the Hon. Mr. Carlton," said he; "he is greatly better, and is so anxious, General, to make his acknowledgments in person for your kind attention, that he proposes calling at the hall to-day."

Lady Emily lingered at these words, in hope that something farther might transpire. The man of law said no more, however; and General Montgomery immediately added, "I shall be happy to see Mr. Carlton. I hear he intends to live on his estate, as a sensible man should do; and to ride through his plantations and his farm, and look after his affairs. He is fond of agriculture, I understand; and this, let me tell you, is a promising trait in any one's character. I agree with the oft quoted Dean Swift, who says somewhere, that 'He who makes a blade of wheat grow where none ever grew before, is a more valuable individual to the community than fifty heroes.'"

"I'm thinking, General," said Miss Macalpine, "that you're forgetting you are a hero yoursel'."

"Pho, pho, Miss Macalpine; not a bit of it, not a bit of it;—in one sense of the word, I hope I have done my duty as a soldier, and can do so again: but pursue conquest in the cannon's mouth for mere amusement! not I, truly—no! no! Mr. Carlton's taste and pursuits are much more in unison with mine."

How much the best of persons are blinded by their predilections! Even the good General could not entertain a suspicion to the disadvantage of one, who professed himself fond of the country and its occupations; yet in Mr. Carlton's case, all things considered, and spite of his love for agriculture, there was room for hesitation. It is easy, however, to turn the tide of personal feeling: a word, good or bad, from the persons supposed to give tone to the multitude will do it; and the unfortunate object of the praise or censure of the moment is raised to the skies by the award of this august tribunal. It is not meant, in the present instance, that General Montgomery imagined he was guilty of injustice or precipitation in thus giving his voice in favour of Mr. Carlton; but he was too guileless himself to suppose any one who took interest in pursuits, which, of all others, lead the mind to a contemplation and a proper sense of the mercies of the Creator, could ever be undeserving of praise, much less be a vicious character.

The vote of the company, however, as the General ended his panegyric (for thus it might be interpreted), was in favour of Mr. Carlton. Lady Frances said that she had often heard him spoken

of in town: she had even seen him—once—or twice—she *believed*, in company with Lord Bellamont—(this part of her information was given with a slight hesitation and a sort of consciousness, which did not escape Emily's observation, though unmarked by others) and though he might live a good deal in the country, she knew he also mingled with *society*, with that marked emphasis in the word which defined her view of the limits within which society was to be found.

Colonel Pennington declared he had always heard that Mr. Carlton was considered an entertaining companion; and that he remembered him, in various places and societies, as very gentlemanly in his address, and perfectly a man of the world.

Lady Emily confessed she should be "delighted" to see Mr. Carlton, because he had forgiven Ambrose.

Her sister laughed at her, for this declaration. "You can think of nothing," said she, "without a reference to your *friend* Rose Delvin. Not long ago Mr. Fitzhammond was the reigning favourite; but the fact is," (whispering, as she turned to Lord Mowbray) "Emily cannot live without a humble friend to flatter her."

"I should think," he replied, speaking aloud, "that Lady Emily might always *command* attention and admiration; and that, if her kindness leads her to protect those in humble life, it is benevolence, and not choice of companionship, which directs her conduct on the present occasion."

"Thank you, Lord Mowbray," said Lady Emily, who had overheard him; "but I must say a word in my own defence:—I never liked any person because they were great, or powerful, or the fashion; I love those I love, naturally, without asking myself why, and then I find out a thousand good reasons afterwards. As to poor Rose Delvin, she is not an intellectual or improving companion, I allow; but she is very good-natured, and good-tempered, very pretty, very young, very lively, very much devoted to me, and helps me in my garden and in tending my birds and my pets. I wish to see her happily settled in her own rank of life; but I have no foolish wish to take her out of it."

Lady Frances interrupted her: "But you honestly confess she is, to use your own romantic phrase, very much *devoted* to you; and that is sufficient, I suppose, to create all this flame of interest in return."

"And a very good reason too," rejoined Lord Mowbray: "did you ever hear the old song?

'*I love* my love, because I know my love loves me:'

It is the best possible reason I know for loving man, woman, child, or animal. It might go a great way with me, I confess."

"I suspect," said Lady Emily, turning her smiling eyes upon him, "that you agree with the sentiment which I have read somewhere, namely, '*Que nous aimons toujours ceux qui nous admirent, mais nous n'aimons pas toujours ceux que nous admirons.*' There are many degrees of attachment."

"Then it comes to the same thing," said Lady Frances; "you are flattered by the admiration of a person much inferior to yourself, into a friendship which otherwise you would not feel."

"Friendship! that is a strong term, sister! no, I could not make *my friend*, one whom education, rank, station, place at a distance from me: Friendship argues an *equality*. I do not like exactly that my good-will towards Rose Delvin should be supposed to fill my *whole* heart."

She coloured as she said this, while Lady Frances, with a supercilious smile, observed: "Oh! I am happy to remark that you can be so cautious, and provide thus warily against possible contingencies, sister."

Lady Emily's spirit, worn out by anxiety, and already wounded by the interpretation given to her morning walks, could no longer bear up against this fresh and ungenerous suspicion; and, to hide her agitation, she made an excuse for suddenly leaving the room. "What can be the matter with Emily this morning?" said General Montgomery.

A silence, which continued for some moments, seemed to acknowledge the inability of all parties to answer this question; until Lord Mowbray, who, perhaps, with Lady Frances, was the only one of the company who understood her conduct in the present instance, replied—"I believe Lady Emily is very anxious about her little protégée, and uneasy at her not coming to the Hall at the appointed hour. I have observed her watching for tidings every time the door opened."

The General appeared satisfied; but remarked, that he feared his dear Emily was laying up a store of misery to herself, in giving way, on all occasions, to the too vivid impulses of an affectionate heart.

Lady Frances's lips curled in disdain at this expression; and she looked at Lord Mowbray as though she would have asked of him, whether he had not his share in the agitation evinced by her sister on the present occasion.

Lady Emily did not appear during the remainder of the morning; and though Mr. Carlton made his promised call, and every one else, influenced either by curiosity or by politeness, had remained at home to receive him, Emily was still absent.

The arrival of a new face in a country-house is generally greeted as an accession of interest by the circle assembled there; and it requires at first no particular claim to superiority to render the visitor an object of general attention. But Mr. Carlton was really a young man of a handsome figure and prepossessing appearance. His recent illness had lent him, perhaps, an interest he would not otherwise have possessed; for he looked pale, moved languidly, and had a large black patch across his forehead. He came evidently prepared to make himself agreeable to the whole party at the Hall; and all being predisposed in his favour, the task was not difficult.

General Montgomery said, he hoped he should have the pleasure of riding with him over his estate, and, as he heard he was fond of agriculture, would show him some improvements in husbandry that he had lately adopted. Colonel Pennington talked to him about the last military promotions, and about fishing and hunting. Lady Frances went through a whole string of town acquaintances and town amusements; in all which, and in the latest fashions and scandal of the day, she found him quite at home. Even Miss Macalpine and Sir Richard Townley obtained an attentive hearing from him, as they individually discussed Scotch scenery and the extirpation of thistles.

Lord Mowbray agreed with the rest, who considered Mr. Carlton a lively, gentlemanlike, young man; but he expressed no opinion of his own. The fact is, that Lord Mowbray knew that, in certain circles, Carlton's reputation was not *en bonne odeur;* and he had heard some anecdotes of him, which disposed him to think, not *too* favourably, of his principles and conduct; but these had been related in confidence, and he was honourably silent.

Lady Frances had discovered that he was to be at Mr. Fitzhammond's ball, and the discovery seemed to have lent her new spirits. The cares of the toilette were no longer a matter of perfect indifference, and her alacrity formed an uncommon contrast with the pensiveness of Lady Emily.

Something of the nature of the mind may be judged of by the attire; and it is easy to know whether a woman's taste has been formed on that standard which can never totally change, because

it is derived from a pure principle of suitableness and innate elegance, or, whether she is the slave of milliners and modes, which own no touch of higher origin. On the present occasion, Lady Frances's toilette was after the last exact Parisian costume; but Lady Emily's was subservient to what became her own peculiar form and face, without departing too much from the fashions of the day, and possessed a charm of indefinite but indescribable power most felt where best understood.

When the party arrived at Sherbourne Park, Lady Emily's heart (notwithstanding the disappointments and contrarieties of the morning) beat with delight at a confused expectation of such enjoyments as she had never yet partaken; for, being two years younger than her sister, she had not run the gauntlet of a London season.

But, before we introduce the company to the Hall, we must introduce the host and hostess to the reader.

Mr. Fitzhammond's father had acquired a large fortune in India, which his son, by bold and successful speculations, had nearly doubled. He was a clever man of business, knew how to seize the power and advantages which his immense wealth commanded, was respectable in private life, pompous with his equals, obsequious to those of superior rank, good-natured to his dependants. Vain and purse-proud, he had married a pretty little woman who worked hard to be fashionable, and gave herself the airs of a *bas-bleu*—in other respects, amiable and pleasing: she duly presented her husband every year with a fat, blue-eyed, white-haired baby; and it was to celebrate the birth of the last of these, a long-desired son and heir, that the present fête was given. A few of their most immediate neighbours were asked to dinner; and in the evening there was to be a concert and ball, to which all the leading people in the county (for which Mr. Fitzhammond was one of the members) were invited. "I hope we are not late," said the General, pulling out his watch, as he entered the Hall, in which he was received by Mr. Fitzhammond. "I believe your clocks and mine are set by the same hand."

"Always punctual," rejoined Mr. Fitzhammond—"always punctual, my dear General, to a moment."

"I know, people frequently do not pay any attention to hours," rejoined the General; "but then those persons seldom pay attention to any thing that is valuable in this life. But where is my dear Mrs. Fitzhammond? how does she do, and the newly arrived babe?"

"All well, thank you, General. Here, this way, this way, if you please—we have opened all our house in honour of the day; and it is not a small one, as you see, General. I believe you never saw these apartments since they were furnished. Through this room, to the left, I beg—there, up these steps—this was the old part of the house; the new is very cleverly added, is it not? My architect, Mr. Kent, piques himself upon this contrivance. I hope the perfume of the flowers is not too strong for the ladies; they are just brought in from my four hot-houses this day. My friend, the King of Bangalore, sent me that shawl-curtain—it is put up quite in a new taste by my upholsterers, Ticken and Squab—nobody like them for contrivance—always finding out something new. Certainly very elegant, but devilish extravagant. My friend, the Duke of Godolphin, sent me these two cabinets. I bought that large picture out of a palace at Genoa—that *was* a bargain; only look at the size of it. But this chimney-piece is Egyptian marble, brought from Grand Cairo. My friend, Admiral Watson, was so good as to procure it for me—it is supposed to have been a bit of the base of Memnon's statue. It half-ruined me to get over; but never mind. Ha! ha! ha! I can still receive my friends."

And thus he ran on as he led his guests through the splendid suite of apartments, till, at length, they reached the drawing-room where sat Mrs. Fitzhammond, several other ladies, and four children of various ages.

Mrs. Fitzhammond rose from the ottoman on which she had been reclining; and Lady Emily stepping forward, with all her own expression of animated kindness, wished her a thousand times joy. Lady Frances paid a few elegant unmeaning compliments, and, after this exertion, dropped into a seat, and remained silent; while the whole of the party, Miss Macalpine, Miss Paterson, Sir Richard Townley, and Colonel Pennington, were presented in turn; and, though last, not least, Lord Mowbray, who had retired to a distant part of the room, to escape the ceremony, but in vain.

The Fitzhammonds were rejoiced to see any friend of the General's; and when that friend had a lord before his name, he became of course doubly captivating. Lord Mowbray, therefore, was doomed to be the object of Mr. Fitzhammond's peculiar solicitude. "Your Lordship has not been long in this part of the country, I presume? I had not the honour of seeing you at our county ball last week, and your absence could never have been caused by such *an omission as the* want of an invitation."

"Pardon me, I have been a good while at General Montgomery's; but I never dance."

"Indeed! and yet, my Lord, dancing is much the fashion just now, I believe; but you prefer sporting, perhaps; the pleasures of the chase, a fine, noble, healthful exercise, worthy of a man. I have a prodigious quantity of game in my preserves, and shall be vastly happy any day that you will do me the honour to take a morning's shooting; my gamekeepers shall be in attendance."

"Thank you, much obliged!" replied Lord Mowbray, "but I never shoot."

"Never shoot!" with a look of astonishment, and then calling up a smile and glancing at Lord Mowbray's slight figure, "Oh! doubtless, shooting is but a laborious sport, after all. I always said, commend me to the pleasures of hunting; nothing to equal it: such an enlivening exercise: well trained hounds, horses in fine condition, men and animals all in pursuit——"

"Of a poor wretched fox, or a timid hare," interrupted Lord Mowbray.

"Yes, my Lord, yes; nothing like it; and then flying over a country at full speed, hedges and ditches disappearing like lightning, and, last of all, in at the death."

"Perhaps in at one's own death."

"My Lord!"

"I mean, that as I ride very ill, I should probably break my neck."

"Ah! very true—doubtless, indeed, if your Lordship is not accustomed to ride. Hem! hem!" and something of a doubtful expression between being nonplussed and thinking it possible Lord Mowbray was joking, evinced itself in Mr. Fitzhammond's face; but determining on the latter venture, and laughing, or trying to laugh, he proceeded:

"Ah, I perceive your Lordship is witty—very witty, indeed, ah, ah!—in at one's own death! very good, indeed, ah, ah, ah!" But still he thought, "I wonder what the devil he does like? and what shall I say next?" when fortunately for Mr. Fitzhammond's distress, he was relieved by being told that the clergyman waited for the presence of the party to commence the ceremony of the christening. The party prepared to obey the summons; and, under the direction of Mr. Fitzhammond, were safely conducted through the various galleries, corridors, and conservatories, to the door which finally

issued into the garden, and thence, through the shrubberies, to the church itself, which stood within his park.

The solemn office of baptism, and admission into the church, was not, in this instance, garbled to suit the idle convenience of nominal Christians, who, without an excuse, save one, which might well raise a blush in every thinking mind, most frequently evade its public performance, and, in the privacy of their chambers, too often hurry over a duty which it ought to be their greatest pride, as it is their highest privilege, to fulfil. This ordinance so touchingly beautiful, so awakening to a sense of duties which, in all the different periods of our lives, in childhood and in maturer years, we are called to reflect upon, derived a higher effect from the sacredness of the spot in which it was solemnized, and the impressive manner of the officiating clergyman.

Lady Emily was moved to tears, and the beauty of her pure expressive countenance assumed an almost angelic loveliness. Lord Mowbray gazed at her with an admiration to which he had hitherto been a stranger; and his own eyes (he knew not why, for he had not *thought*, he had only *felt* with Emily) were also filled with tears, which he vainly endeavoured to conceal under his thickly fringed eyelids.

Lady Emily looked up, and there was a moment, an electric moment, of conscious mutual approbation, mingled with something dearer and tenderer still, the remembrance of which no after-time could efface.

The ceremony closed, and the good wishes and congratulations on the occasion offered and received, the party returned to the house. "Well, General," said Mr. Fitzhammond, as they re-entered the drawing-room, "I hope your drive has given you an appetite; we are only waiting for the Duke of Godolphin, with Lady Arabella and the Marquess of Bellamont, and Mr. Carlton, and Captain Lepel, and the Countess of Glassington. Sandford," calling to his butler, "the moment the Duke of Godolphin's carriage is in sight, serve the dinner."

At this instant, Lady Glassington was announced. She was an old lady, with the remains of great beauty, as straight as if laced up in buckram, and as formal as if she had been playing at visiting all her life. Her attire of half a century back, her consequential smile, and air of protection, as she paid her compliments to the master and mistress of the house, all told of the consciousness of being come of a

race which held a charter of ancient nobility, but this was expressed, as it should be, with native dignity—ay, and with native kindness, too. "I hope," said Mrs. Fitzhammond, addressing Lady Glassington, "we are to have the pleasure of seeing Mrs. Neville!"

"Surely; I never go any where without Mrs. Neville,"—looking behind her for her constant attendant and inseparable friend—"Mrs. Neville, where are you?"

When in came a light figure, like a piece of parchment, covering skin and bone, with the springing step of fifteen; in person, dress, manner, every thing the most perfect contrast to Lady Glassington herself. "Charming, charming!" she exclaimed; "so you are all waiting for me?—pray don't wait any longer. How do you all do? My dear Mrs. Fitzhammond, how do, and baby? But what charming improvements you have made; I thought I should never have got into the room. And my dear General, too! So you were at the christening, and the child is to be called Bangalore—well—the nabob's child called Bangalore!" (laughing) "mighty good that—charming; but, as I was saying, what a delightful house!" and she flew round the room, pushing aside, without ceremony, every one who impeded her progress; first admiring one object of decoration or curiosity, then another; while Mr. Fitzhammond followed her, endeavouring in vain to explain the history and reason and merits of each individual or ornament. "Bless, me, what a divine monkey!" stretching out her long, lean arm across an Indian cabinet to reach it—when, in doing so, she tumbled down several rare specimens of china that fell in fragments to the ground, and with them, the object of her unfortunate admiration—the monkey itself.

"What have I done! who could have thought it?"

"Who could have thought otherwise, my dear Mrs. Neville?" said Lady Glassington in a tone of disdainful anger, while Mrs. Neville ran up to Mrs. Fitzhammond, and taking her hand with a familiar air, exclaimed, "Oh! forgive me, my dear Mrs. Fitzhammond. What shall I do? I must buy you another monkey, but where shall I find such a divine monkey? I shall never be able to afford it if I do find it. I must try and persuade Lady Glassington to buy it." The good-natured Mrs. Fitzhammond begged her not to distress herself, and ringing the bell, very quietly desired the attendant to clear away the vestiges of her misfortune.

Lady Glassington, meanwhile, gravely rebuked Mrs. Neville. "You know, my dear Mrs. Neville, you should never touch any thing: I have told you *so a thousand* times. I wonder you do not

learn better manners, since we have lived a good deal together, and I have been indefatigable in teaching you. I wonder you have not at least learnt to know that you break every thing you come near."

"Well, I'm sure I do think I'm the most unfortunate!—thank you, Lady Emily." (Emily was endeavouring to disengage her flounces from the carved work of a gilt chair) "I don't know how it is, my flounces are always catching in something or other—but don't scold, Lady Glassington, it is not *your* monkey, you know, that is broken, and Mrs. Fitzhammond is 'Mistress of herself though china fall,' so good-humoured, so serene. Well! to be sure, it is beyond belief."

The double doors now flew open, and the Duke of Godolphin came in with his daughter, Lady Arabella Courtney, his eldest son, the Marquis of Bellamont, and a fashionable hanger-on of the latter, already known in these pages as Captain Lepel.

The Duke was a man of magnificent stature and appearance, covered with honours and orders. Lady Arabella and Lord Bellamont were both handsome. Lady Frances, to whom their appearance was perfectly unexpected, absolutely half rose from her chair with astonishment; and she and Lady Arabella accosted each other with the measured tokens of mutual recognition, which it is allowable to fashionables to express. The Duke approached Mrs. Fitzhammond with stately courtesy; but before he could get half through the compliments he had prepared for the occasion, he was interrupted by Mrs. Fitzhammond's entreating him to sit down, and pushing half a dozen chairs across his toes, which his Grace dexterously evaded by stepping aside, and declaring he had rather stand. Then having made a slight bow to the company, he placed his back against the wall, near the fireplace; and while his host stood on tiptoe to reach his ear, the grandee himself cast an eye around to ascertain that there was nothing so great or so powerful in the room as himself; and having ascertained that fact, a smiling air of complacency overspread his features, and he whispered to the delighted Mr. Fitzhammond till dinner was announced.

CHAPTER X.

We meet! but not as once we met;
Our better days are o'er,
And dearly as I prize thee yet,
I cannot love thee more:
My young and precious hopes were wept
With many a tear away,
And since thy faith so long has slept,
It wakes too late to-day! T. K. Hervey.

The company paired off according to Heraldic laws. Mr. Fitzhammond handed down Lady Arabella Courtney; the Countess of Glassington followed on the arm of Lord Bellamont, while Lord Mowbray hung a little back; Mr. Carlton stepped forward and offered his arm to Lady Frances; Lady Emily, of course, fell to Lord Mowbray; and the remainder of the party followed as near to the prescribed forms of precedency, as the arrangements of the moment permitted.

The Duke of Godolphin secured to himself the honour of conducting Mrs. Fitzhammond to the dining-room, where the parties became happily approximated in the manner most agreeable to their respective tastes.

Lady Emily found herself between Lord Mowbray and Colonel Pennington. Lady Frances was pleased to have Lord Bellamont on one side and Mr. Carlton on the other. While, within reach of the dumb-show peculiar to the caste to which they devoted themselves, and on the opposite side, sat Lady Arabella, with whom Lady Frances continued an intelligence throughout the dinner relative to all that was passing obnoxious to their ideas of ton. The favoured gentlemen of their suite, the initiated in this freemasonry of impertinence, were participators in the scene; and while the really well-bred part of the company felt distressed at the suppressed laughter and rude whispers which passed from one to the other, the unfortunate relatives of the house, persons, in fact, infinitely superior to those who scorned them, and whom Mrs. Fitzhammond had the good sense and the good feeling never to exclude, even at the risk of having a mixed company, sat abashed and mortified by fashionable folly. In the midst of this inharmonious and uncongenial banquet, a pause frequently took *place, which, if not* disturbed by the significant looks

tempted to give, would produce a Lethean draught of his mistake. In his confusion, he pressed every one to partake of it, with the exception of the nobleman, whose feelings he was conscious had been offended by his inadvertency, and by so doing, drew the attention of all present, more particularly to the "head and front of his offending."

The wine was served, and the guests partook of it; but one little, short, quick-eyed man with a shining face, and well powdered hair, a relative of Mr. Fitzhammond's, who had sat hitherto silenced by the presence of the company in which he found himself, seized upon the unfortunate subject of the mines, and, as one familiar in the matter, addressed himself with confidence and in an audible voice to Mr. Fitzhammond. "By your leave, Fitzhammond, I think I I can set you right in that affair. The thing is this: there are mines, which, I believe, would well repay the expense of working, as you say, but there is a difficulty, and if his Grace would allow me, I think a word from his Grace in the proper quarter, would set it all right—I flatter myself——"

"Frank, will you take a glass of Sardanapalian wine with me," said Mr. Fitzhammond, in a voice that by its echo he wished should drown all that had, or would have fallen from the lips of the last speaker. "This wine," he continued in the same loud key, "was given me by a merchant from the Levant, and it is supposed to possess qualities such as no other wine in the world ever had. It is, in short, the *unicorn* of wine."

"Unicorn!" whispered Captain Lepel; "capital, i'faith; I would not have missed that on any account."

Mr. Fitzhammond's cousin allowed his glass to be filled with this famous wine: but neither its flavour, nor the continued interruptions he experienced, when attempting to speak, availed in enforcing silence upon him. Turning each time with imperturbable perseverance towards the Duke of Godolphin, he added—"But if your Grace would but condescend to give your attention to these mines, your interest would be all powerful. Your Grace's interest is paramount."

"You do me a vast deal of honour," replied the Duke, with one of those freezing looks of authority, which, among his own family and attendants, was wont to take effect like Jove's thunderbolt—"you do me a vast deal of honour, Sir."

But the comfortable pertinacity of the character who addressed him, was proof against the cold superciliousness opposed to his

ıttack ; and taking his Grace's words of usage for words of favour, ıe continued with proportionate confidence, "Your Grace is too ɔbliging. A company, now, formed under your Grace's direction, your name at the head of it——"

"Sir!"

"I shall be happy to give your Grace all the information in my power; indeed, your Grace will find the scheme very much of the same nature as that which your grandfather—no, your Grace's great grandfather I mean, undertook."

Here Mr. Fitzhammond was seized with such a violent fit of choking, that the whole table was thrown into consternation; and the united advice of the guests, all recommending opposite remedies, were well nigh completing the catastrophe by choking him in good earnest.

"*Hunch! hunch!*" cried Mrs. Neville, in the midst of the bustle; "what is the matter?—only choking, eh? oh, charming! charming! I have it;" and feeling in her pockets (for she had never been persuaded to discard them), she drew forth a piece of whalebone with a sponge affixed to the end: "here! this is the only remedy—it never fails,—put it down the throat; it is beyond belief how many lives it has saved: as to my own, it has been down my throat often and often."

Lady Arabella and Lady Frances exchanged glances. "How obstinate you all are!" cried Mrs. Neville; "will none of you use it? But I believe, after all, poor Mr. Fitzhammond only choked himself because he could not choke his cousin. Wasn't it charming?"—looking round and laughing. Then again whispering, "Lord Mowbray, how people can be such fools! it is beyond belief."

Lord Mowbray nodded assent, and replied,—"It is; but now I hope we are going away, for I see Mr. Fitzhammond is quite recovered, and I am tired of sitting here."

The last efforts, in fact, made by that gentleman, to check the unfortunate turn of the conversation, had proved effectual; and though the issue of his self devotion to the Duke's pride was, by the eagerness of friends to afford remedies, for some moments likely to prove fatal to himself; yet virtue, it is said, is always its own reward, and his heroism was ultimately crowned with success:—whether it atoned for the offence inadvertently given is not quite so sure.

Mrs. Fitzhammond now looked towards the ladies, and they rose with one accord in obedience to that uncourteous law, which dismisses them, after a limited sufferance, from the society of the nobler

sex. In barbarous times, when females united in attendance on their lords, such dimissal from their presence might carry with it no consciousness of degradation, nor convey the idea, as it does at the present day, to a woman's mind, of ungentle and unpolished superiority exercised over her. In what scene, when she does take a part, will not her influence be felt, in shedding, over the manners and habits of man, a refinement and polish, which, robbed of her society, he never attains? and surely, in his relaxations and pleasures, man should feel that the more of knightly grace, the more of courteous elegance he can mingle with them, the more removed they become from mere sensual indulgence, the less they resemble the festive rites of by-gone people, among whom he would be indignant to be classed, but whose example, in this point, he follows more closely perhaps than he is aware. It is to the gentlemen of England that these remarks apply; and to a country where more intellectual and personal charms exist among the fair sex, perhaps, than can be found in the same limits all the world through; and yet it is here that this odious custom remains. It is to be hoped, that the "march of intellect," as it has somewhere been called, may succeed in overthrowing this remnant of barbarism; and that, with the belles lettres, a proper course of chivalry and good breeding may become one of the essentials of education.

Lady Arabella and Lady Frances, as they left the dining-room, directed a look of mournful intelligence to their respective cavaliers, indicative of the horrors they foresaw awaiting them in Mrs. Fitzhammond's female circle; and, as if forming a treaty of mutual defence and protection against it, joined arm-in-arm as they passed the door, and went whispering together from the apartment. Lady Emily never dreaded *ennui;* but, pleased and satisfied in herself, she always contrived to find some amusement in others; and, on the present occasion, she joined Mrs. Neville; for with her unsophisticated taste, Lady Emily delighted in originality of character, especially where worth and kindness formed its basis. As Mrs. Neville knew every body's history, she amused her young companion, who laughed heartily at the wit with which she related a thousand anecdotes of times past and present.

"I wish to heaven, Emily," said Lady Frances, in a low voice, as she swept past the sofa, arm-in-arm with Lady Arabella; "I wish you would leave off those *grands éclats de rire!*—nobody laughs now—it is quite vulgar."

"How do they manage?" asked Emily, looking up; "I am sorry

it is vulgar; but if I must not laugh, I must not sit beside Mrs. Neville—take me with you, Frances!"—and she smilingly disengaged herself from Mrs. Neville, and took a turn up and down the room with Lady Arabella and her sister.

How strange are the laws which fashion and prejudice frame for the observance of their followers! how perverted often the nature of their institutes! The unchecked, easy flow of the youthful spirit; the early grace of nature, it might almost be said, of innocence, gives place, under their baneful rule, to the measured expression, the artificial air, and, too often, to the assumption of a knowledge of the world, which in itself supposes the absence of that purity and delicacy which best adorn the youth of woman.

The characters of Lady Frances and Lady Emily were direct illustrations of the power of an early initiation into the frivolities of *ton*, and of the better tendency of an education uncontrolled by its ascendancy. Lady Emily had hitherto never shared in these frivolities, and the time which, happily for her, had left her free from their contagious influence, was a profitable period in her existence, wherein were garnered up many a virtuous and rational principle, many an active and useful habit of employment, which made her in after life the comfort and delight of others, and bestowed upon her the inestimable possession of self-approbation.

Reflections similar to these were entertained by Mrs. Neville as she gazed on the sisters passing to and fro, and remarked, that Lady Emily had found the conversation of Lady Arabella and Lady Frances so complete an antidote to laughing, that it had produced repeated yawns, till the entrance of Mrs. Fitzhammond's children furnished her with amusement, and she was soon engaged with two or three of them. They were nice intelligent little creatures neither too forward nor affectedly *maniéré;* and with that instinctive perception of character, or rather of *disposition*, for which children are remarkable, when tired of running the gauntlet of unmeaning caresses and silly compliments, they attached themselves to Lady Emily. They drew her away to the upper end of the room; set all their little faculties to work to amuse her, by bringing forward the thousand toys, trinkets, nameless and numberless, which loaded the rosewood-table—albums in splendid bindings, which were sure to please the eye by their outward magnificence, however they might disappoint those who too adventurously examined the contents within—portfolios which, in ambush, had often caught the unwary artist *into* a payment of his admission by a con-

tribution of his talent; or, at other times, flattered the young lady who *painted* but did not *draw*, by permitting her pink and white Cupids, or Chinese perspectives, to be the pendant of some graphic effort that a Raffaelle or a Titian had not blushed to own.

Thus, with one little cherub on her lap, while another had mounted a footstool to reach her ear, and a third was perched on the arm of a large fauteuil, Lady Emily sat in the recess of a large bay-window, partly closed in from the gay moving assemblage, by the curtains of Indian silk, which fell in rich folds on each side of the recess, relieved by a back-ground of myrtles and orange trees. She formed, with her little companions, so lovely a group, that the attention of some of the gentlemen was drawn towards them. At this moment, coffee was served; and Lord Mowbray, who was the first to leave the dinner-table, entered the saloon. "Do, my Lord, luke at yon picture in the recess," said Miss Macalpine, seizing his arm; "is it no' bonny?—the sweet lady—the sonsie bairns, and a'? But dinna gang and spoil it!"

"It puts me in mind of Correggio's Carità," said Lord Mowbray, with a glance of admiration and delight; "how unconscious she looks! how lost to self!"

He proceeded, without well knowing from what motive; and had just reached the recess, and met one sparkling glance from Emily, who loked up at his approach, when Mrs. Fitzhammond observed that music was the best way of filling up the time, and, addressing herself to Miss Macalpine, said, "I have often heard that you Scotch ladies are famous for reciting and singing those interesting ballads, which are, I believe, common to your country: do pray favour us with any you may know; there is nothing that I love so much; no entertainment that so completely absorbs me for the time being, as the union of story and poetry with music."

Mrs. Fitzhammond spoke her real sentiments; for she had a genuine love of both, and understood and felt them thoroughly. "Oh! do, pray, do, pray!" was echoed from all sides, save from the spot where sat the Ladies Frances and Arabella.

"One must have lived before the flood," murmured Lady Frances to her companion, "to have had length of life for one of those interminable ballads. Good heavens! she will not sing, surely."

"Troth!" said Miss Macalpine, in her broadest Scotch; "I never was gude at minding thae ballads: though ance I had a voice wad ha'e riven a stane dyke; but my friend, Miss Paterson yonder, has a gey wheen o' thae rants; come, Jennie, g'e us a tune."

"Really, Marian, I dinna mind ony at this present; sure as I'm ed it aye pats them clean out o' my head."

"But The Lassie's Moan wi' the Aunt's Reproof,—maybe, ye'll hae forgotten that?"

"Ablins I can mind it, if you 'll just put in a word now and then: ony rate I can but try;" and down she sat to the piano, giving it a e thumping staccato touch. "Hoot! it's no' that—let's see—" mping again on another key—"whare was I? wait awee," and e twirled her fingers about with the true jerking strathspey time. en, in a voice that was still sweet, though it had known better ys, she sang

"*The Lassie's Moan wi' the Aunt's Reproof.*

"The little foot page is awa' to Dundee;
Much rather I wad he had bidden wi' me;
The bonnie wee boy wha ran light at my knee
Made me joyfu' to hear, made me blythsome to see.

My little foot page diverted me weel;
A glance frae my blue een rewarded his zeal:
Sae blythe, yet sae douce, sae respectfu', sae kind,
I shall ne'er hae anither sae much to my mind.

A' day he stood watching to guess my intent;
On me, and me only, his fancy was bent:
He stood at my back, or he knelt at my knee;
Why is he awa' to that dirty Dundee?

On him the first glamer o' fondness I cast;
It dizzied his brain, and the chain held him fast;
The chain was as light as his temper was mild;
He fancied me mither, I fancied him child.

At morn he came saftly, and tirled at the pin,
And waited my pleasure till he would win in;
At night he bow'd low whan he wish'd me gude e'en;
He was a weel-doing and beautifu' wean.

He louped the burn and he clamber'd the brae,
To pu' me the rasp or the wee shining blae;
The fast-binding ivy he tore frae the tree,
And gard it a wreath for my temples to be.

As I sat at my wark the gay callant was near,
Wi' saft words sae canty my labour to cheer;
He found the lost needle, the sunky he brought,
And knew what I needed as soon as I thought.

Oh! Waly, I'm wae that the laddie is gane;
I'm a' the day dighted sae weary alane;
And when he departed, I grat mysel' blind,
To forget him sae sune wad betray a light mind."

"Now for the Aunty :—

"Now hush ye, ye silly bit lassie! now hush,
For sure the world's tongue wad hae been crying tush!
To view a young creature o' gentle degree
Forgath'ring and daundering wi' sic na laddie.

It is weel for ye baith he 's off to Dundee;
It is weel for ye baith that no more ye shall see
Thae silly daft days o' sic bairnish delight,
For sure they your life might wi' penitence blight.

Beware o' the scaith, and beware o' the scorn
That dark overcasts fair youth's brilliant morn,
Which cankers the flower ere its leaves are all blown,
Till they drap ane by ane, and their glory is faw'n.

Calve luve is a dangerous thing weel I ken,
For bairns grown to laddies, and laddies to men;
The burn rins by wimpling that passes the lea,
But sune it is ane wi' the wild roaring sea.

Then haud your tongue, lassie, nae mair let me see
Ye are murning for him that's awa' to Dundee:
Be wise, bairn, be wise, glamour o' luve
Is a vapour frae earth, no' a spark frae above."

"And now the Lassie replies:—

"O, auntie! nae mair o' your prudence and preaching;
The lessons o' age to my youth ye are teaching;
The chill frosts o' winter now strip the bare tree,
And preach wi' mair meaning a lesson to me.

They tell me each season o' life, like the year,
First blooms, then decays, and at length becomes sear;
Should Spring's early dawn, then, an Autumn face wear?
Say when would ye gather the fruits o' the year?

I heedna the scaith, and I heedna the scorn:
Sic tauntings and girnings are easily borne:
When the heart is right leal to virtue's fair laws,
What care I for censure or wardly applause.

To you like the seer, sae sad and sae wae,
The past scenes o' life can the future display.
You fancy that ill which perchance ne'er betides,
And tyne present peace in the future besides.

But I, with youth's instinct o' joy, still pursue
The glamer o' pleasure that blinks in my view;
Wha is the maist happy?—be candid; confess,
Though your pains may be fewer, your pleasure is less.

I pu' at the rose, and I heedna the bryar,
Gin I miss the fair flower I grip at a higher.
Say I catch but a leaf wi' a thorn ilka while,
It is but repaying a tear for a smile."

"The Auntie's last wordie :—

"'Tis unco weel, lassie! I canna pretend
Wi' the gift o' your gab ony mair to contend.
Ye make wrang appear right, and right appear wrang;
Sic fausseties sure to young lassies belang.

Oh! wha to the waves o' the ocean can say,
Your roarings gie o'er, and expect they 'll obey,
Or wha will enkindle the fire wi' the snaw,
Or bid the winds bide, when they 're willing to blaw.

Gin there be ony sich, let them claver to youth;
'Tis paulky experience alane teaches truth;
Youths' confident minds 'tis in vain to alarm—
Lord guide us, be gracious, and keep us frae harm!"

The circle who had stood around the piano, professed themselves enchanted; and Mrs. Fitzhammond said she "could listen all night."

"*Did you ever?*" said Lady Frances to Lady Arabella, looking with contemptuous astonishment at the party around the singer.

"*Did you ever?*" Lady Arabella, with an answering expression of horror, replied—"*too!*" and Lady Frances rejoined, casting her eyes upwards, "*beyond.*"

It would have been difficult, certainly, for any one uninitiated in the manners and language of *the sect* to affix a precise meaning to unconnected words like the foregoing; and if indeed any interpretation at all had been attempted, Charity would rather have inclined to the belief that they were sounds falling from the lips of infants who were as yet ignorant of the use or power of speech. But Charity, though kind, must be just, and the words which, in their insignificance might have challenged untutored Nature, in its first lisping efforts at pronunciation, came accompanied with looks of contempt and arrogance, that left those who caught them in little doubt as to the context, and none at the indecorum and want of breeding of the speakers.

Poor Miss Macalpine, who knew enough of the bye-language of the fashionables of her day to interpret Lady Arabella's and Lady Frances's expressions to their utmost extent, felt for her friend, and endeavoured, by talking to her incessantly, to draw off her attention from the attack; but the language of the looks cannot be mistaken, and every one of the party, even Miss Paterson herself, was aware of the ill-suppressed ridicule of these *accomplished* young women of fashion.

Fortunately, at this moment, several of the expected evening guests were announced, more rooms were thrown open, and the saloon,

where the concert was to take place, was already filling with the different musicians, whose notes of preparation, as they tuned their various instruments, sent forth a prelude of the approaching performance. The children clapped their hands and sprang forward; they were to sit up to hear the famous Italian singer of whom every one was talking. Lord Mowbray offered Lady Emily his arm without speaking. "You love music, I know," said Fitzhammond, as they passed her; "and your sister? where is she? Lady Frances, you must have heard this new *prima donna* in town?"

"No," said Lady Frances; "she had not come over, though she was announced."

"Does she sing so incomparably?" said Lady Emily.

"To say she sings finely, does not embrace one-half of her powers," said Lord Bellamont; "she combines with the greatest compass and sweetness of voice, the talent of an improvisatrice, and composes, on the instant, whole scenes and entire pieces on any given subject, with the most astonishing facility and eloquence."

"She is a most surprising creature!" said Mrs. Fitzhammond.

"I hope," continued Lord Bellamont, "she will be in great force this evening; for Mr. Fitzhammond has prevailed on her to assist in the musical part of the entertainment, and she arrived here this morning; but she is so shy, or dislikes our English manners so much, or is so careful of herself (as she assured us it was necessary to be in our climate), that no persuasion could induce her to appear in the drawing-room, and she will only make her *entrée* when every thing is ready in the concert-room."

"Careful of herself with a vengeance," said Captain Lepel, shrugging up his shoulders; "for no one, I am certain, has been allowed to approach her within an arm's length. She receives her glove, if one hands it to her, with a grace that appears equally calculated to keep you at a distance, as to thank you for your courtesy, and then you obtain nothing but a cold bend of the head to repay your pains. 'Pon my honour, she is too retiring a beauty for me—and not handsome either at first sight—and rather low of stature—but then she has an oval face, a harmony of features—a mouth without corners—and an expression, 'pon my honour, after all quite fascinating, quite indescribable, a sort of Sappho,—quite invincible, 'pon my honour.—Do you not think so, Bellamont? I know you *would* have been one of her most devoted admirers,—if—she would have suffered you."

"A mouth without corners! what does that mean?" said Mrs.

Neville to Lady Emily: "charming, charming; well, to be sure! it is beyond belief."

"Hech, Sirs! keep me; I never heard the like o't. Weel I wot, a mouth without corners; it must be unco gashlike. I canna understand that same," screamed Miss Macalpine, pressing her head over Mrs. Neville's shoulder to look at the speaker.

"Whare is't to be seen, Sir?" she continued, holding Miss Paterson by the arm, and addressing Captain Lepel; who, eyeing her from top to toe, and questioning by his look her authority to speak to him, replied—"Oh, in the next room, Ma'am;" and then turning superciliously on his heel, whispered to Lady Arabella—"Who in the earth are those old frights? Let not your Ladyship suppose by my answering that they have any claim or kin with me—there is disgrace in the thought."

"Why, no, Lepel," said Lord Bellamont, "we cannot suppose she had, by your *mode* of answering. Poor creatures! how could you send them on such an errand? they are looking everywhere for the 'mouth without corners;' and see, they have fastened on Lord Mowbray."

"Oh!" said Lady Frances, "he is quite the sort of man for elderly ladies. He pays them the greatest attention from morning to night, I assure you; and there is Emily, too, does the same: I should not be astonished if they also joined in the search."

As Lady Frances ceased speaking, she observed her sister and Lord Mowbray approaching; and, as if to retaliate on the latter for past neglect, her eye glanced for a moment on him, and, immediately turning to Lord Bellamont, with an air of ill-concealed triumph, she endeavoured to engross his conversation and attentions entirely to herself. Mr. Carlton, too, stood on her other side, content to receive the smiles which now and then Lord Bellamont's inattention allowed to fall short of their destined mark; and, encouraged by such good fortune, seemed proud of the permission tacitly granted of playing the second part in the piece. Indeed, to do Lady Frances justice, she managed these three flirtations together with admirable skill, and played off her admirers one against another with infinite effect. Mr. Carlton, as a man well versed in female tactics, felt his situation to be one of no little importance. Lord Bellamont was the prize; but in all probability his Lordship knew his own value, as far at least as Lady Frances's computation went, and was not to be gained without manœuvre and management. A rival, therefore, real or pretended, would prove the best means of decid-

ing the question. And thus, the attentions of one who had sufficient pretensions for the purpose, had their value in the progress of such an affair; and, in the ending, let it end which way it might, would seldom go unrewarded. "Ah, Lepel!" said Lord Mowbray, as he drew near the group, "I heard you just now speaking of Rosalinda. Whom do you mean?"

"Whom do I mean? whose Rosalinda? why, my Lord, my Rosalinda—your Rosalinda—every body's Rosalinda—the *prima donna* of the Opera."

"Impossible!" murmured Lord Mowbray to himself; "impossible!" he continued, in evident abstraction.

Lady Frances and her party seemed highly diverted by Captain Lepel's careless manner of explaining himself. Lord Mowbray, apparently irritated and indignant, turned from them, repeating, "Vain, impertinent coxcomb!"

"So he is," said Mrs. Neville, who had overheard the latter epithet: "Charming! if such truths were spoken a little oftener, it would do a great deal of good in the world."

"Pardon me," replied Lord Mowbray, for a moment recovering himself, "it would do much harm; I did not intend to have spoken so loud."

"Well, to be sure, it is beyond belief that you should think so. For my part, I would have a name found for these nondescripts, and it should be one quite as significant as those you have just now bestowed, my Lord. But where are you dragging Lady Emily, Lord Mowbray?—well, to be sure! how the man strides across the room."

Lord Mowbray's manner certainly was sufficiently extraordinary to attract attention. Apparently unconscious that Lady Emily held his arm, he walked with hurried step from the spot where Captain Lepel stood, like one completely absorbed in painful reflection. The gaze of the surrounding crowd rendered Lady Emily's situation very distressing; and she would have given any thing to have found Miss Macalpine, or some one of her party. At length, a general murmur running through the apartments, and the number of persons passing round them, aroused Lord Mowbray, who trying to appear unembarrassed as he spoke, asked what all that bustle meant? It was impossible for them to proceed; and as Lady Emily felt they were less observed in the crowd, she was glad to remain where they were.

The whisper now spread, that the improvisatrice had entered the

music-room, and the cause of the throng in that direction was explained. Lord Mowbray and herself were borne with it, and soon found themselves at the entrance, where the circle enlarged, and the company were arranged to listen to the music. Rosalinda was standing at the extremity of the apartment near the orchestra.

A general and uncontrolled stare, such as people are too apt to imagine they have a right to exercise on those who are paid to divert them, was directed towards her; but though thus made the unhappy object of idle couriosity, her quiet unobtrusive dress, demeanour and manner, seemed to defy criticism, while a certain air of tranquil dignity, that would have awed even impertinence itself into silence, marked her whole deportment. Lord Mowbray and Lady Emily found the seats near the door occupied by Lady Frances, Lady Arabella, and their attendants; and the repeated entreaties of Mrs. Fitzhammond could not induce them to move to the upper part of the concert-room. Disturbing the assembly by their whispers and remarks, and to the disappointment of Lady Emily, they persisted in remaining where they were; "For," said Lady Frances, "ten to one, we shall be tired of the thing before it is half over, and we can never get away from the top; but if you are so anxious, sister, to be there, why do you not go? I dare say, Lord Mowbray will take you very safely."

These last words were uttered with an expression that recalled to Emily's mind the former cruel insinuations of her sister, and she almost withdrew her arm from Lord Mowbray's. The movement startled him; and as her eye caught his features, she thought she had never seen such a visible alteration in any one's countenance in so short a time. He was deadly pale; but his outward manner, as he addressed her, was calm; and he inquired in a low voice if she desired to move higher. Lady Emily wished herself any where but where she was, yet the recollection of what she had suffered in following Lord Mowbray across the drawing-rooms, made her dread a recurrence of the scene by moving again. So, answering in the negative, they remained stationary. "Dear me!" exclaimed Lady Frances staring rudely, "handsome! not in the least." Lady Arabella made a face in token of her coinciding in this opinion.

"But her eyes!" said Lord Bellamont,—"surely you will allow *they* are beautiful; they are so like fine velvet; and her expression so engaging, so melancholy."

"Oh! my Lord, if you are for melancholy beauty, I can say nothing," replied Lady Frances, appealing to Mr. Carlton for his

opinion, and turning full upon him with one of her most bewitching smiles—a smile that seemed to shake Lord Bellamont's preference of melancholy beauty. For a few moments, he did not even look towards the orchestra; but as Mr. Carlton dexterously paid his court to Lady Frances by exalting her beauty at the expense of that of the young Italian's, Lord Bellamont undertook the defence of the latter most eloquently, and she had the mortification to see that his admiration of the object before them was certainly as warm as unfeigned.

"There is something very uncommon in her countenance," said Lady Emily to Lord Mowbray, after contemplating Rosalinda with genuine unenvying admiration. "Do you not think so? It reminds me of the head of Niobe which stands in the dining-room at the Hall—but she looks very, *very* sad—as if nothing could interest her: I pity her; don't you?"

"Pity her!" ejaculated Lord Mowbray, shrinking, as a man would shrink under a painful operation—"I do not know—that is—is she an object of pity?"

"Is she not obliged to leave her own country, to appear in public, to act and sing for bread?"

"I suppose not. I should think she need not do it, unless it were her choice."

"Impossible! No woman would do it from choice—at least, no woman who looks as she does. How interesting her countenance is!" continued Lady Emily; "I should like to be acquainted with her. You knew her in Italy, did you not?"

"Who said so?" said Lord Mowbray, with quickness.

"Oh! perhaps I was mistaken," said Lady Emily, alarmed at his sudden manner; "but if you know her, and would present me to her, I should be quite delighted to persuade her to visit us at the Hall. She is, I am sure, just the sort of person I should delight in."

"Perhaps," answered Lord Mowbray, "General Montgomery might not approve of my presenting her to your Ladyship."

At this moment, General Montgomery passed the doorway, attended by Colonel Pennington. His love of music had made the good General quit the whist-table even before the rubber was finished, and when he had three honours in his hand; but it was impossible, as he said, to resist the voice of the Syren. Lady Emily seized Colonel Pennington's arm; and while she was begging him to stop the General, Lord Mowbray disappeared.

Lady Emily felt relieved by his absence. During the last half-hour, she had been oppressed, she knew not why; she gladly, therefore, placed herself under Colonel Pennington's care; and, as they reached the spot where seats had been reserved for them, silence was commanded. "Hush! hush!" went round the room. "Rosalinda is going to sing," and the concert commenced.

The first part was from the "Didone Abbandonata;" every body applauded, though few understood or felt it. The General and his family were exceptions. Even Lady Frances knew what music *ought* to be; but there is a point beyond which knowledge does not go; and to reach this is to arrive at the very source of art, where art itself is superseded by a higher feeling. Perhaps Lord Mowbray would have felt it all, but he had disappeared from the moment he quitted Lady Emily's side.

The whole performance was throughout excellent; the music chosen was of the highest order; and for that very reason not tasted or enjoyed by the greater part of those who heard it; but it answered just as well. Half the delight of half the world at any exhibition of art, consists in pretending to feel and understand what they are totally incapable of comprehending or appreciating. There was, however, a pathos, a passion in the united excellence of Rosalinda's enunciation both of words and notes, which spoke a language more or less understood by the dullest minds; and in the scene which she *improvisé'd*, her action of itself conveyed the impression of her meaning, and became the interpreter of a tongue known but to few who heard her.

The whole room rang with plaudits, and as the concert proceeded to its close, these testimonies to her merit reached their climax. As soon as the last notes died away, Lady Emily hastened to find Mrs. Fitzhammond, intent on her object of becoming acquainted with Rosalinda, the display of whose talents had rendered her more than ever anxious to know her.

As she stood looking round on every side to discover Mrs. Fitzhammond, and entreating Colonel Pennington to do the same, Mrs. Neville joined them. "Well! is it not charming? quite beyond belief?"

"Oh, yes," said Lady Emily; "and she is such a charming person, that I wanted Lord Mowbray to make her known to me; but he said, my uncle might not approve of his doing so. I quite long, however, to converse with her; there is such an indescribable air about her. What *could* Lord Mowbray mean?"

"I know not," said Colonel Pennington, "unless it be that she is a public singer; and perhaps for so young a lady it would be as well to avoid an intimacy,—though, to be sure, in the world there are many considered presentable, who might be avoided with equal and perhaps more justice than this poor lady."

"Oh, charming! charming!" screamed Mrs. Neville. "*Presentable!* yes! No one objects to Lady Honeytown, and she is beyond belief. Why, she has lost her character over and over again. I believe she has as many reputations as a cat has lives; and no one objects to her. But then she has had as many legacies as lapses, and has come out at last a rich whitewashed middle-aged woman of good character; has a large house, gives excellent dinners, and finer assemblies; and that is all that is necessary. And as to Lord Mowbray's objections and scruples, and prudery, about this divine Rosalinda, and he a travelled man; it is beyond belief. You and I, my dear, will go up and introduce ourselves,—you speak Italian?"

"Yes; but, my uncle,—I must know what he thinks."

At this moment, Lord Bellamont and Lady Frances passed, on their way to the ball-room. "Emily, are you not going to dance?" asked her sister; and before she could reply, Mr. Carlton stepped forward and requested her to dance the next dance. Lady Emily was disconcerted, and hesitated to reply. Her whole thoughts were for the moment turned on Rosalinda and Lord Mowbray, and perhaps too she had hoped that Lord Mowbray would be her partner; but her sister's voice, and the look which accompanied it, as she said "Come, Emily, come if you are not engaged," obliged her to decide against her wishes, for she was *not* engaged, and she dreaded Lady Frances's interpretations.

She took his proffered arm, therefore, with an appearance of as much gaiety as she could assume; and they had nearly reached the ball-room when her attention was attracted to Lord Mowbray and Mr. Fitzhammond. The latter was following him to the door, and endeavouring by holding his coat-sleeve, to prevent his moving on, insisting with great earnestness—"Pray, my Lord, if you *will* go, let me order your carriage to come up; I cannot think of letting you wait for it on the staircase: but I wish I could prevail on your Lordship to stay?"

"Why surely Lord Mowbray is not going," cried Mrs. Neville, who hastened up to ascertain the cause of the bustle; "I will not allow him to go away upon any account. I delight in your monosyllabic conversation, my Lord; it is so quaint,—charming, upon

ay honour!—and now-a-days, when every one copies his neighour, so that there is no knowing one person from another, there is omething quite captivating in originality. It is beyond belief! I annot allow you to go, my Lord."

"You do me honour, Mrs. Neville," said Lord Mowbray; and ently disentangling himself from Mr. Fitzhammond's fingers, he xcused his departure on the score of sudden indisposition, and with dexterous sliding bow made his exit.

"Well, to be sure," echoed Mrs. Neville, looking after him; well, to be sure, it is beyond belief!" then making her way to the dancers, she singled out Lady Emily, and appealed to her for the reason of Lord Mowbray's sudden retreat.

"I suppose he was offended by your not dancing with him; why wouldn't you?"

"Indeed," replied Lady Emily, "Lord Mowbray had not asked me to dance."

"Well, then, I suppose the Italian woman—what is she called? —is the cause. I never saw a man in such a hurry to leave a pleasant party in my life; I declare it is beyond belief!"

Lady Emily felt for Lord Mowbray, who, she was conscious, had drawn the eyes of all the room upon himself by his extraordinary conduct. She hoped only, that no one had seen so much as she had done; for whatever occasioned the violent agitation of feeling evinced by him, she pitied, as she always did pity, every one who she saw was suffering.

"Poor Lord Mowbray, he looked very ill!" she said, in reply to Mrs. Neville's last remark; "and I dare say he has done wisely to leave all this crowd and heat."

"Pshaw!" said Mr. Carlton, "he is always complaining of his health and his nerves. He is horridly affected and consequential: a pretension to refinement too, that is quite disgusting. I saw him before he travelled—he's spoiled now—so altered for the worse!—every body thinks so who knows him."

"Do *you know* him, Mr. Carlton?" said Emily.

"Oh! we used to meet in town, but I always avoided him as a man would a foggy day in November."

"Indeed!" said Lady Emily, "*I* have known his lordship during the last few weeks, since he has been with us at the Hall, and I have found nothing of what you describe."

"Oh! your Ladyship's smiles would dissipate the densest cloud, I am certain; even Lord Mowbray's gloom must yield to them, if

turned on him," replied Mr. Carlton, with an air of gallantry: "for my own part, he was the only chilling thing I encountered this morning at Montgomery Hall."

Dancing commenced, and Lady Emily wondered why she did not find as much delight in the amusement as she had expected. She blamed the music—the heat of the room—her partner (who, if not a dancer of the first excellence, at least was not negligent or self-engrossed)—she blamed, in short, every thing but the true cause. She sat down after the first quadrille, and felt happier when General Montgomery proposed returning home, than she had even felt in the prospect of the ball. Such is pleasure! nine times out of ten, such is pleasure!

Lady Frances, however, was in high spirits, and though a little dissatisfied at leaving the scene so soon, was, on the whole, content with the progress made during the evening, in an affair which she fancied affected her heart. Again, in returning, as in setting out, Lady Frances was the gayest of the two sisters; a circumstance so unusual, that General Montgomery rallied Lady Emily on the subject, and she was obliged to plead a bad headache as an excuse for her apparent silence and want of spirits.

CHAPTER XI.

In all losses I would have a double prospect; I would consider what I have lost, and I would have regard to what I have left. It may be in my loss I may find a benefit. I may be rid with it of a trouble, a snare, or a danger.

OWEN FELTHAM.

On the morrow, when General Montgomery left his room, a note was put into his hands. It was from Lord Mowbray, thanking him for his kind hospitality, and alleging urgent business (which, however, he would not allow to interfere with his accompanying the family to Mrs. Fitzhammond's the preceding day) as the reason of his sudden departure. He had set off at a very early hour, before any of the party were risen.

The note was read at the breakfast-table, and Lord Mowbray's departure would have given rise to expressions of general regret at any other moment; but the different individuals had so much to say and to remark upon the subject of the last night's amusements, *that the announcement* made little impression apparently, beyond

transient pause in the conversation, and an exclamation from olonel Pennington, of "Pooh! pooh! what business can a man ave who never does any thing? All nonsense!"

But Lord Mowbray was gone; and as it has been said, the company were too much engaged to speculate upon the cause.

As Miss Macalpine, however, paced to and fro on the terrace with olonel Pennington, in the course of the morning, she referred to he subject, saying—"Perhaps it's just as weel, after a', that the oung Lord should hae ta'en himsel' aff."

"Why?" said the Colonel; "he'll do no good anywhere else."

"He was doing na gude here, Colonel!" said she significantly.

"Ah! how do ye mean?"

"Colonel, ye're an auld and discreet friend. Dinna ye think our eddie was beginning to tak' to him? I minded her last night, vhen he went away so suddenly from Mrs. Fitzhammond's; and this norning, when the General was reading the note, did ye mind those weet eyes o' her's, Colonel?"

"No—I was minding my breakfast."

"But do you think—for I fear no'—do you think, Colonel, that Lord Mowbray is just a man to sit down content by the ingleside wi' a wife for the rest o' his days? He's a queer chap yon; there's no making him out rightly."

"It's not easy," said Colonel Pennington; "for he is mighty mysterious. I do not like mysteries; and yet, as I loved the late Lord Mowbray, so do I love this; but his conduct is something that passes reason. Urgent business, indeed! What urgent business, can he have to take him away in such a deuce of a hurry?—all nonsense! he lives by chance, and does not know his own mind from one day to another."

"It's like eneugh," rejoined Miss Macalpine; "and for the sake o' our Leddie Emily I am just as well pleased he's awa', for he might hae wiled her heart out o' her breast, and then hae thought no more o' it or o' her. You men, Colonel, *can* do thae things whiles!"

Colonel Pennington heaved one of his heavy groans, but made no reply; and they continued walking the terrace in silence till interrupted by Lady Emily, who came flying towards them, and with an expression of joy on her face very unlike the look it had worn in the morning, exclaimed, "Oh, I am so happy, dear Alpinia! so happy, dear Colonel Pennington! the day is fixed for Rose's mar-

riage; the parents have made up their differences, and every thing wears a smiling aspect at the Delvins' cottage. I *am* so happy!"

And Lady Emily *was* happy: but it was by participation in the promised happiness of others. In her own heart, another feeling would have prevailed, had it not been overmastered by this excitement of the moment; and already, though unconscious of it herself, the cloud was rising there that was so soon to overshadow the brightness of her youthful path.

As she hurried from the terrace to seek General Montgomery and acquaint him with the good news, Miss Macalpine followed her with her eyes, exclaiming, "I wish I could think all this quite natural, but somehow she's not quite like herself. What think ye, Colonel?"

Colonel Pennington seemed loth to reply; and as if he had not digested his anger against Lord Mowbray, or was doubtful what answer to make to Miss Macalpine, he walked on in silence for a few minutes, and then abruptly left her and entered the house.

Mr. Carlton became a constant visitor at the Hall. The previous interest shown by General Montgomery during his illness, and the reception he met on his first calling, aided by the sort of tacit intimacy which appeared to have taken place between himself and Lady Frances, placed him, in some measure, on the footing of an old acquaintance; and while he availed himself of the privilege which circumstances had given him, his general politeness had made him a favourite with all parties. He accompanied the General in his rides over his plantations and farm. On these occasions he showed himself so well acquainted with the age of every tree, descanted on its growth and properties with so much knowledge of the subject, suggested so many ingenious improvements in husbandry, and appeared really to take such interest in every thing allied to a country life, that he daily gained in General Montgomery's good opinion, while to Lady Frances, in the drawing-room, he proved himself a most able auxiliary, either as a flirt to be played off against Lord Bellamont when occasion offered; or, in his absence, a very useful and devoted cavalier.

Lady Frances, as we have related, had the misfortune to lose her mother very shortly after her introduction into "Life," as it is called; by which is meant bringing forward a very young girl into society, who, hitherto immured in the school-room, escapes at that period from the trammels of her governess, with no other ideas beyond those of a suitable alliance and establishment, and who, ignorant of

very thing which in the long run constitutes the happiness of married life, is by this one act rendered competent (such is the conclusion) to decide on a point involving the fate of her entire future existence. For marriage is the first object of every young lady; and, too generally, of every mamma; and constitutes the very end and aim of an introduction. The sagacity and affection of the parent may, by averting the mischief incident to such a system, sometimes succeed in saving her offspring from the shoals and rocks of a hasty or ill-judged connexion; yet where this friendly counsel is wanting, what accumulated dangers gather round the inexperienced adventurer in her choice! what perplexities bewilder her judgment! what temptations assail her innocence, and stand ready to betray her into levity, if not into guilt! Such had been Lady Frances's fate: introduced into the world at an age when her judgment and her principles were alike unformed, and deprived of the only support and direction which *can* effectually influence a young mind to its true interests, she had become the victim of this too early initiation into the follies of fashion. She had not hitherto married, because the dangerous vanity of universal suffrage and homage from men in general, had made her look upon the devotion of *one* individual as in comparison flat and insipid. She had not sought or gained a single female friend; because women, who by similarity of habits might have been her associates, were, in a career of coquetry, for this very reason, dangerous rivals; and those from whom no competition was to be feared, shunned naturally an intimacy with one whose principles were so much at variance with their own. Youth, however, and novelty, and great personal charms, will for a time prevail against the judgment of the thinking and sober part of the world; and Lady Frances, with all these advantages on her side, was not likely soon to feel the effect of her error. Wherever she appeared, she commanded *admiration*, if she did not ensure respect; and in the gay and giddy throng in which she moved, it was not likely she should hear the partial censure on her conduct that fell from the lips of a few moralists, or the lesson which even worldly prudence would have taught her. Her career was too dazzling and too successful to admit of reflection, even if Lady Frances had been more capable of it; and reflection to a mind like hers seldom comes but at a time when it can avail nothing by its counsels. She had shone and glittered for four successive seasons, exercising a tyrant's sway over the heart of almost every young man of

rank and fashion who approached her; and she had rejected offer after offer, in the indulgence of her ruling passion for admiration.

But time, and a conviction perhaps that her powers of fascination were declining with their novelty, had taught her wisdom of securing an alliance suited to her future views, and in a degree such as her vanity and ambition in her zenith might not have disdained. Marriage, therefore, became first tolerable, then desirable, and last of all, a leading motive and object in Lady Frances's mind. Still young—more beautiful even—more matured in charms than when she first attracted the gaze of the court on her presentation, she felt that it required only the will to yield her independence, to insure her any alliance that might appear adequate to the sacrifice.

The last season spent in London had been devoted to these heartless calculations; and the facility which her stay in the Duke of Godolphin's family afforded of making Lord Bellamont the victim of them, had decided her choice. Lord Bellamont was heir to a dukedom; the wealth of his family was great; its political influence vast; and he himself was mild and good tempered; and, though not devoid of sense, was still the kind of character whose easy disposition was likely to yield to the influence of any woman whom he loved, and by whom he could believe he was loved in return. He became, in consequence, the object of Lady Frances's matrimonial speculations, and the circumstances both of her previous and present intimacy with the family, appeared to give her promise of complete success. But Lord Bellamont was universally polite and attentive, and it was difficult to determine, frequently as they were thrown in each other's society, whether he intended any thing more in his civilities to Lady Frances, than what his natural urbanity would have led him to exhibit to any other woman. Versed as she was in all the turnings of the heart, Lady Frances, at the end of the London season, and when her visit to the Godolphins drew to its close, still remained in doubt, therefore, whether any impression had been made on Lord Bellamont; and it was under this idea, and considering her frequent opportunities of being seen by him in the country, that the attentions of Lord Mowbray on his arrival at the Hall, and subsequently, of Mr. Carlton, had become a point of such importance with her; for, as has been observed, she felt certain that no circumstance would operate so powerfully in her favour, or bring matters so readily to a conclusion, if any love existed in

Lord Bellamont's heart towards her, as a suspicion that she was interested in some other quarter.

It is easy to suppose that in a family circle, with attractions such as Lady Frances and her sister's society constantly offered, and where the most cordial hospitality joined with the most urbane manners, ever welcomed the visitor, an idle young man of fashion, like Mr. Carlton, found a constant resource, and one which he failed not to avail himself of; and it is equally easy of belief that, in doing so, he afforded to the busy gossips of the neighbourhood ample grounds to conclude that his marriage with one of the Lady Lorimers was already definitively arranged, and that it waited only the drawing-up of the settlements for the event to be formally announced. In that mart of village news, good Mr. Combie's shop and caffé, the subject had been already discussed and settled in full conclave. In the coteries of the neighbouring town, it had been the same; and Mr. Aldget, who was looked up to as the surest oracle in the matter, contributed to give strength to the rumour by his knowing looks and innuendoes, as often as the subject was alluded to, and by a certain rubbing of his hands and a smile of complacency, which he never assumed but when affairs were likely to go well with him; and, in fact, General Montgomery himself, although matters had not proceeded so far as his sagacious neighbours surmised, was rather prepared for a formal declaration on the part of Mr. Carlton; and, with the predilection already formed in his favour, an offer of marriage with one of his nieces would have met the most hearty concurrence from the General.

But in the currency of these rumours, to a certain degree sanctioned by appearances, what thought Lord Bellamont? Neither he nor his family made allusion to them; and the conduct of the former underwent no change towards Lady Frances whenever they met, and that was frequently. It was impossible to suppose the report had not reached them; and their silence, therefore, could only be attributable to a disbelief of it; or to offence that the communication had not been more directly made; or if (and certainly there was an *if*) Lord Bellamont had been interested in the affair, to pique and resentment on his part, which he determined to hide by an apparent carelessness as to the issue.

Whatever was the real cause, the accustomed intercourse between the families continued without the matter coming to any conclusion. Lord Bellamont, when in her society, invariably attached himself to Lady Frances, and Mr. Carlton as invariably "vacated his seat, and

accepted" Lady Emily, although the latter, setting aside her good-nature, was by no means a companion so suited to his taste as her sister. And as this at last seemed mutually understood between them, Lady Emily, whenever she could, excused herself from the dance or the promenade; and, joining Colonel Pennington or Miss Macalpine, found in their conversation a relief from the empty dulness of Mr. Carlton's diary of town-scandal. Lady Frances, in her turn, never failed to take advantage of these opportunities afforded by Emily's want of taste, as she termed it, in thus discarding her beau; and Mr. Carlton too readily accepted the offer, whenever open to him, of holding a tenure, in common with Lord Bellamont, in her smiles.

It was impossible that either party *could* be ignorant of the reports circulated respecting them; and as the views of Lady Frances on Lord Bellamont were sufficiently apparent, it must be supposed that she and Mr. Carlton had each their interest in keeping up a semblance of Flirtation, although the motive, if any were assigned, would have been little creditable to them.

Three weeks had now elapsed since Lord Mowbray left the Hall; and, with the exception of Mr. Carlton's intimacy and the gradual advancement of Lady France's plans, no event had occurred out of the usual routine of a country life. Circumstances, however, rather at variance with that tranquil innocence which certain moralists consider as indigenous in rural scenes, while they suppose it flies the feverish turmoil of a large and populous city, arose to break the general monotony.

One morning as General Montgomery was talking over with Mr. Carlton some intended plantations on his estate, Lady Emily entered the room. She shrunk back at the sight of Mr. Carlton; but her pale agitated look had caught her uncle's notice. "What is the matter, dearest and best? Are you not well?" he inquired. "Tell me, what is the matter?"

"Oh! dear uncle, Rose—Rose has fled from home, and her parents are distracted—Poor Ambrose, too!"—and as she pronounced these words, she fixed her eyes on Mr. Carlton. She fancied his sank under her gaze.

"Rose fled!—and with whom? What can this mean? General Montgomery exclaimed.—"It is inexplicable. With whom, and why is she gone?"

"Oh! dear uncle, it matters not; some wicked, some very wicked person, can alone have tempted her to this step. It matters

not who he his; the dreadful deed is done;—it is everywhere known; and the good Delvins are childless and disgraced."

"It is inexplicable!" said General Montgomery, in a low voice, and as if he was musing inwardly.

"My dearest Emily, why she was to have been married at the end of the month, was she not? and *who* can thus have tempted the poor girl to her undoing? When did she quit her parents' cottage?—and how?"

"I know nothing more," replied Lady Emily; "I know only the melancholy fact; and I left the wretched parents but now, to communicate with you, dearest uncle, assured that you would feel for them, and advise them for the best."

"I do indeed feel for them, from the bottom of my heart; and for you too, dearest Emily, on this unhappy and guilty conduct of your protégée."

One of the most painful feelings the heart can know, is to learn the unworthiness of a person who has hitherto shared our good opinion and protection; we are at once mortified at our mistaken judgment, and wounded in our affections. "Come hither, my child," resumed General Montgomery; and as he folded her in his arms, her bosom heaved in quick and convulsive sobbings. General Montgomery was himself deeply affected; but struggling with his own feelings, he sought to assume a calmness which in reality he did not possess. "Emily, my love, instead of lamenting, should we not think of what is to be done? Go, leave me for a short time, and I will consider the matter over. I will either see or send to the Delvins; and I entreat you, do not give way to this sorrow. Go, dearest, and we will meet again soon."

As he spoke, he kissed her forehead, and again assured her of what, indeed, she had no room to doubt, his affectionate and instant attachment to the subject of her grief.

After she was gone, General Montgomery paced the room in silence for some moments. "This girl Rose," he said at length, turning to Mr. Carlton, "has been an attendant on my niece, and she had become attached to her: I hope her kindness has not been misplaced."

"I trust it has not," said Mr. Carlton.

"But at any rate," resumed the General, "if she can be rescued from infamy, for her own, for her parents' sake, I shall be happy; and the attempt must be made. I must send for these poor Delvins and hear the story from them."—He went towards the bell, but

checked himself.—" Stay; they will be in grief, and it will pain them to meet the village gaze so soon after what has happened. I will ride down to their cottage; will you object to accompanying me, Mr. Carlton, so far?"

"Not in the least, General," he replied; "but cannot I spare you the painful task of witnessing a scene such as will doubtless present itself in their now wretched circumstances?"

"But I must do something, and instantly," the General observed, "though I have little hope of being able to do any thing effectual."

"I know old Delvin," said Mr. Carlton; "he holds his cottage, you are aware, from me, and I have been in the habit of seeing him often. Do let me go. I will endeavour to learn every particular, and will return and report to you what I can gather."

"My dear Sir, I thank you," said General Montgomery, taking his hand, "as much for your wish to spare me pain, as for the interest you feel in an affair that so affects my Emily. Go: if you will kindly undertake this charitable office, I shall await your return with impatience."

Mr. Carlton immediately left the apartment, and stood higher in General Montgomery's opinion, if possible, than before, from his prompt alacrity in charging himself with this mission, to undertake which, certainly argued a degree of feeling and sympathy much to the credit of his heart.

General Montgomery sent for Emily, and they continued together in his own apartment, looking with anxiety for Mr. Carlton's reappearance. The first dinner-bell had already rung, and the servant was asking his orders respecting it, when a note was brought to the door. It was from Mr. Carlton, and contained a few words written in pencil, in a hurried manner, from the Delvins' cottage:—

"My dear General,—The information I have received here, leaves no doubt of the direction taken by the fugitive; but the utmost despatch is requisite to take advantage of it. I believe I am only following the wishes of yourself and Lady Emily in immediately pursuing the clue which I have obtained. You shall hear shortly from me.—GEORGE CARLTON."

General Montgomery read the note over a second time; and being informed that it was brought by a peasant, to whom Mr. Carlton had given it, from the door of Delvin's cottage, and that he had immediately taken the road to the Manor House, the General communicated its contents to Lady Emily. Whatever distrust of

the individual who had thus voluntarily stepped forward to assist the Delvins in their distress, and who, unasked, had taken upon himself the task of investigating the mystery attached to Rose's disappearance, might have suggested itself to Lady Emily, she carefully avoided any expression of her sentiments, well aware that her doubts of Mr. Carlton's integrity on this occasion would be considered in the light of the most ungenerous and unfounded suspicions. But there is frequently in woman discernment which supersedes al reasoning: it is best designated, perhaps, by the French word *tact* and may be called a sixth sense, given pre-eminently to the female sex.

Several days passed, and no tidings of the fugitive reached General Montgomery, or the unhappy parents. Lady Emily was their sole comforter, and, under the affliction which had visited their humble roof, her sympathy was the only earthly balm they could bear to receive. Every day saw her steps bent to this house of woe. She said nothing; for what can words avail in the first moments when sorrow assails the heart? Heaven alone can give consolation to the wounded spirit.

The poor Delvins knew that Lady Emily felt for them; and even her silent presence shed a calm over the minds of both. The bitter tears of mingled sorrow, anger, and shame, which burst from the eyes of the wretched mother, were changed to the soft weeping of a subdued and humble spirit, as the hand of her kind benefactress was affectionately laid upon hers; and old Andrew, with eyes fixed, hands clasped, and despair, in its most iron form, imprinted on his countenance, yielded, at the ministering angel's approach, to calmer feelings, and to a more resigned and Christian frame of mind.

Thus had passed an entire week; a period which, measured by the duration of suffering, had appeared to the sufferers a long and countless succession of days and nights.

At length, on the eighth morning, a letter was brought to the Hall, under cover to General Montgomery, and directed to Andrew Delvin; still there were no accounts from Mr. Carlton. Lady Emily immediately carried the letter herself to the poor old father; anxious, and hoping that it might contain tidings of comfort. The writing was evidently that of a feigned hand. Delvin seized it in the first eagerness of the moment, and breaking the seal, was preparing to read its contents, when, sinking back in his chair, he extended it to Lady Emily, and begged her to read it aloud to them. Covering his face with both hands, the poor man appeared to be collecting

strength to listen to the nature of its intelligence: it was as follows:—

"Dear parents, I hope you will not grieve and take on for me, for I am very happy, and hope soon to convince you of this, and to make you also very happy, and very rich too. I was very sorry to leave you; but I determined in my own mind never to marry Ambrose, and I am under the care of one who will make me much happier than he could ever have done; for I hated his brutal behaviour, and he may thank himself for having lost me; however, I do not wish him any ill, now I've got rid of him. I will write to you from time to time; in the meanwhile, accept the enclosed bill for fifty pounds, from

"Your dutiful and loving daughter till death, "ROSE DELVIN."

"Base and deluded girl!" exclaimed old Delvin, in a voice almost choked by agony, and taking the letter and its enclosure from Lady Emily, as he continued, "What! does she think that this, *this*, the price of her infamy, can prove a recompense to us whom she has brought to shame, and will see before long laid broken-hearted in the grave! No! no! unnatural, ungrateful girl; these are the wages of her sin, and never shall it be said that Andrew Delvin could barter his child's innocence for money. No! nor bear to look upon it, nor touch it, take it away, let it not be found under my roof. Oh! lady, that I should have lived to this day, to learn the ruin of my child, my poor, lost, deluded child!"

A flood of agonizing tears streamed down his furrowed cheeks as he ceased speaking, and, with clasped hands and eyes uplifted to Heaven, stood rooted to the spot.

Great grief and strong passion give eloquence to the *rudest* child of nature; and the bursts of sorrow and indignation that alternately escaped the lips of the unhappy parents, would have formed a tragedy of the deepest pathos.

A third mourner was added to this miserable family in old Philips. He had succeeded in bringing back his son from the recruiting party, and had obtained his discharge. Andrew Delvin and himself had been reconciled, and their children would have been married in a few days when Rose fled. Struck down by this second blow, and unable to endure his existence in the state of life and in the scene where he had promised himself so different a fate, poor Ambrose had disappeared upon learning Rose's treachery. It was at first supposed he had pursued her flight; but though his father fondly indulged in this idea, those whose feelings were less interested, or whose minds were more alive to the probable effect which the calamity that had befallen him would produce, began to fear the worst.

Inquiries were made on every side: no traces could be discovered, and suspicion daily grew stronger. The search was renewed with more anxiety: at length his body was found several miles below the village, carried by the current of the stream into which he had cast himself in his despair, and where a dam across the water had stopped its farther progress. As it was borne home to his wretched father's cottage, it seemed as if this horrible catastrophe was alone wanting to complete the tragedy.

Poor Philips received the news with more composure than might have been expected; and though he went as a mourner to the Delvins' cottage, where Lady Emily saw him, he also went in the kindliness of his heart to afford what comfort he could; for, said he, "Their child lives but to be a disgrace to them; while my poor boy, though he is no more, has, I hope, found mercy for his sins; and the errors which he committed cannot be said to be his: Andrew Delvin needs consolation more than I do."

Lady Emily left him there as she quitted the cottage, pleased with his resignation and the true Christian spirit he displayed. As she took her way to the Hall, the countenances of the villagers all wore marks of sorrow and consternation at the tragic occurrences of the past week; and though the word was an unknown tongue to them in *their* humble sphere, the fatal effects of Flirtation, the want of that principle and purity in the female character which alone uphold and protect woman in every different station of life, were deeply felt and acknowledged by them; and became, in the fate of Rose Delvin, a long-continued warning to the rising generation around.

CHAPTER XII.

Oh! meet him not to-night—be not alarm'd—
I am not mad—but, in th' Almighty's name,
Beware of him! I have had dreams and views
Of coming evil, from this man: be sure
Some stumbling-block, some unknown trial, now
Awaits your faith. Oh! pray, and turn for help
To Heaven. JUBAL, BY R. M. BEVERLEY.

"IT is curious," said General Montgomery to Colonel Pennington, as they sat after dinner, having listened to Lady Emily's detail of Rose Delvin's conduct and poor Ambrose's unhappy end—"it is curious to observe the difference which exists in characters of the same family and the same sex. Emily is as deeply concerned at the

misfortunes of the worthy Delvins as though she were one of their own rank and station in life; and though you will understand that I feel the misery of a fellow-creature is still misery wherever it occurs, yet the force of habit is strong, and generally speaking, mankind sympathise in proportion only as the object of commiseration approaches their own immediate sphere, and calamity appears to draw nearer to themselves in the misfortunes of some individual of their own particular class. Emily is an exception to this rule; but, on the other hand, Frances is an instance in its favour."

"I can understand," said the Colonel, "why Emily should feel so much more for the Delvins than Lady Frances does; but I cannot account for her indifference to her sister's feelings."

"Nor I; at least I can account for it on no other principle than that which I have named. When I look forward, Pennington, to the fate of these two girls, whom I consider as my children, for they are both very dear to me, I confess to you, that I think with terror how soon they may be left without a protector. Miss Macalpine, you well know, is like a child in the affairs of the world; and the fortune of these girls will render them objects of attraction, setting aside their personal charms. My dear friend, should I go first, promise me to be to them what I am."

"Nonsense!" replied the Colonel, forcing a smile, "I shall die long before you."

"Life and death, Pennington, are not in our own power, or within our calculation; we will not dispute about what it is foolish to talk of. But will you give me your promise?" continued General Montgomery.

"With all my heart, if you wish it; only it is great nonsense."

"You promise me though, Tom?"

"I do."

They wrung each other's hands. "And now let me confide a secret to you," added General Montgomery: "Aldget, the worthy Aldget, has invested the principal part of my funded property, as well as the fortunes of these girls, in a manner so advantageous, that the return will be enormous. I feel the affair, on his part, to have been an act of friendship, and not a mere lawyer's job; and though you shake your head now, you will agree with me in thinking so in the end, I am certain."

General Montgomery here entered into a long explanation of the scheme in which he had been induced to hazard his nieces' fortunes, and a very large portion of his own money. As he finished speak-

ing, he looked up into Colonel Pennington's face; but no approbation of the measures he had been detailing, nor any acknowledgement of the soundness of his reasons for adopting them, was there *apparent;* on the contrary, the Colonel knit his brows closer than usual, and the only articulate sound that escaped him was a loud and very equivocal "*humph!*"

"'Sdeath, man!" cried General Montgomery, betrayed into unusual warmth by Colonel Pennington's manner, "one would think I had told you I had embezzled my wards' property."

"Perhaps you have," rejoined the latter.

"What do you mean?"

"Nothing, my friend, counter to your honour, but a good deal counter to your prudence. Mad attempts to obtain wealth are seldom crowned with success. It does not seem destined to man that he should acquire riches without labour; and if hereditary descents, and the accumulation of wealth from one generation to another, are adduced as instances in contradiction to this principle, they cease to be so when duly examined. I will be bold to say, that scarce a single generation passes away, between the original founder of family greatness and his successors, when, if the *duties* that such possessions impose, and which are labours in their kind, have been neglected, the wealth and riches of that family have not been removed; and as my friend Miss Macalpine would say, 'Misled awa like snaw aff a dike;' for though we are apt to account for such circumstances by attributing them too frequently to contingencies, to misfortunes, and to chance, yet be assured there is more of a higher influence in our individual destinies than mankind are in general ready to allow. The talent, you know, is taken from him who makes an unworthy use of it, and is bestowed where it will be better employed; and this just sentence is often passed upon us even *here*, that we may avoid its condemnation at a future day, when there will be no appeal. In the step you have taken, I think you have been over anxious to provide for worldly objects—beyond what was incumbent on you; you had enough—your circumstances were sufficient for the station in which Providence had placed you. Why seek to gather more? 'Give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me,' was the prayer of a wise man."

"God knows it was always mine, Tom; and if I have erred, it was from a mistaken idea of what I considered my duty to others. I should, at the time, have thought myself to blame had I not acceded to Aldget's proposal."

"It was tempting, I allow; but I should not have done it," replied Colonel Pennington.

General Montgomery sighed, and for a few moments there was a dead silence, broken only by the heavy breathing of his friend and his beating a tattoo on the carpet with his right foot, while he pulled his ear to its utmost extent, as if implying, he would rather pull it off than withdraw a point in the opinion he had pronounced.

The evening was now quickly drawing in; and the air, which had been heavy and sultry all day, became more and more oppressive. The setting of the sun had been obscured by a host of dense clouds, which, gradually ascending from the western horizon, had overspread the whole firmament, and had hurried on the darkness of night, without the sweet intervention of twilight. A short, languid gust swept past the window every now and then, but suddenly subsided without refreshing the close air; the slender trees, which stood near the house, and which, even in tranquil weather, greeted the ear with a light and pleasant rustling were now entirely motionless; the birds ceased their accustomed evening song; faint flashes, like the reflection of distant lightning, were occasionally seen; and every thing betokened the approach of a thunder-storm. "Pennington," said the General after a pause, "the storm that has threatened us all day is coming at last. Do me the favour to ring the bell. We must have the outer shutters closed."

At this instant, a violent peal of thunder shook the house, and a dreadful crashing sound followed as if some part of the building had fallen, or an explosion had taken place near it. The bell was rung again loudly, and at the same moment several servants entered the room in haste. They were endeavouring to answer the inquiries of the General as to the cause of the tremendous report just heard, and to explain the mischief done, when the great bell of the entrance-hall sounded several loud peals: the servants looked at each other, but no one moved. "It is the lightning again," said Colonel Pennington, "running along the wires: set the windows open, or we shall be suffocated."

This advice was about to be followed, when another loud sounding of the bell made General Montgomery think differently. "Go directly," he said, "to the door; it is some one who seeks shelter from the storm: go directly, and admit them."

"Why, to be sure," said Colonel Pennington, "if any one be at the door, he ought to find admittance; one would not shut the door

against one's enemy's dog on such a night as this: but it's the lightning, I tell you."

"We shall soon see, Tom," replied the General.

"Ay, and feel too," murmured the latter, "when we are suffocated with brimstone, and burnt to a cinder."

"Where are my nieces, and Miss Macalpine?" continued General Montgomery to the servants, with some anxiety.

Before any one could answer, the servant who had gone to the hall-door, re-entered, apparently out of his senses with terror. "Who is it?" asked the General hastily. The servant was speechless. "Who is it?" again repeated General Montgomery; "cannot you answer me?"

"I hardly can, Sir; for I never saw him before, and hope—"

"But you have let the person in, whoever he is, have you not?"

"Why, no, Sir!"

"Good heavens! go, all of you, instantly, and bid him enter. In such a storm to shut the door in the face of any one! Go instantly: you, Gregory, stop: tell me what it is that alarms you in this manner?"

The General was obliged to repeat his orders a third time to the attendants, for the distrust that their fellow-servant's looks and half-answers respecting the visitor inspired, made them loth to obey. "Go with them, Pennington, will you? and see what all this is about. Tell me," continued General Montgomery, very quietly turning to the man-servant, who remained in the room, and whom he imagined the loudness of the tempest had bewildered—"are you afraid of lightning?—it is very awful—and I know some persons *are* terrified beyond the power of commanding themselves,—but it is no fault, Gregory."

"No, Sir; I have been in too many storms by sea and land to be afeard of *them;* but such a man as stood at the door when I opened it, I never saw before. He was wrapped in a large cloak of scarlet, which looked like fire as the lightnings played upon 't, and his face deadly pale like death; and he held a black steed by the bridle, that seemed as impatient to come in as himself."

"Nonsense, Gregory; your senses have forsaken you in the uproar of the tempest. Why, to be sure, man and beast would alike be impatient in a night like this."

Before he could inquire farther, Colonel Pennington entered, and, beckoning to the servant to leave the room, seemed anxious to speak. "Well, who is it, Pennington?" said General Montgo-

mery; "Gregory would have made me believe it some Blood-red Knight from the other world, who has rode on this storm to visit us."

"By my faith!" looking with anxiety to see whether Gregory had really left the apartment, "I do not wonder the fellow was startled," replied Colonel Pennington, "for your visitor is a strange one, to say the least of him. He wears a mask, and declines giving his name, although he demands, and with an air of authority too, to speak with you, and his communication can be with no one *but* you. My word for it but he bears himself highly enough, and I know how he should fare were he in my hands;—he should but dry his dripping garment at the fire with your grooms, and then go bootless of his errand, and be glad he had escaped a second ducking in your horse-pond."

"You are always violent, Tom," answered General Montgomery. "There is some mirth intended at my expense, depend upon it, in this exploit; to see whether I am to be alarmed at a mask, perhaps; but, be the object what it may, I think the actor in the drama has been punished enough already by the elements."

"I would show him, however, that this was no house to play his practical jokes in," grumbled the Colonel.

"Nay," said the General, "we need inflict no farther vengeance. 'Tis plain he is no conjuror, or he would have chosen his times and seasons better. We'll see him, and I think the laugh will be on our side."

The General then rang, and desiring the stranger to be admitted, a tall, commanding figure, wrapped in a scarlet cloak, and with his features completely hid by his vizor, entered the apartment. He bowed as he advanced towards General Montgomery, who, as he surveyed the wet and pitiable condition of his visitor, thought how dearly he had paid for his jest, were it one, and expressed himself sorry that the storm had burst before he reached the Hall. Then, pressing him to be seated, with that courtesy which it was natural to him to show to every creature, he begged to learn the nature of his communication, which he understood from Colonel Pennington, his friend, was to be made only to himself; and an explanation also of the unusual disguise which his visitor had assumed.

While he spoke, his eye glanced towards Colonel Pennington, who, not quite so much at his ease on the subject, had walked towards the window, and, throwing open the blinds stood scrutinizing the stranger by the help of this additional light. "I am aware that my

ınce," said he of the red cloak, "must excite unfavourable
ns in the mind of General Montgomery; and yet I am come
ın friendly mission, and intend a friendly service."
ely that voice is familiar to me; I have heard it somewhere
thought Colonel Pennington: and he drew nearer to catch
ls more distinctly; while the Mask continued:—
purpose, however, cannot be explained before a third per-
I must request to speak with General Montgomery alone."
t you shall not, if I have any influence," said Colonel Penn-
romptly, and with great determination in his manner: "I
ver for it, General Montgomery will offer no objection to
ş a party, let your communication be what it may."
lask surveyed the speaker from head to foot, as if impatient
terruption, and as if he would awe him into silence. Then
:o General Montgomery, he added in a measured voice,—
ɔ understand, Sir, that this is *your* determination also, and
deny me a conference but in the presence of a third person?
r mission must fail, for, I repeat, I can intrust to no ear but
e intelligence I have to communicate."
r not a step!" said Colonel Pennington resolutely.
me warn you, however," continued the Mask, disregarding
nel's words, "that it is no light matter which brings me to
interview; and I bid you beware, if you persist in refusing
you meet with misfortune where you little fear it. Arrange
er, therefore, with your friend: but resolve quickly, for I
many a weary mile to ride." So saying, he turned away,
king to the farther extremity of the apartment, left General
nery to decide upon his answer.
eneral and Colonel Pennington exchanged looks, as the
moved from them. "I do not know what to make of my
said the former; "he seems too much in earnest to be
ı part: what's your opinion, Pennington?"
t he's an insolent rascal!" replied the other, in a voice
ade the Mask look round and again eye him from head to

h! hush!" whispered General Montgomery; "you will do
by intemperate language. Here, step with me into my
d at least speak quietly, whatever you may think."
l Pennington followed General Montgomery somewhat
gry dog, when his master's command, and the fear of chas-
oblige him to quit a fray; but the tail erect, and sidelong

mode of retreat as he leaves his antagonist, and the long continued growl of defiance, show him at the same time unconquered, and anxious for a renewal of the combat:—in such temper, muttering the indignation which he felt it impossible entirely to suppress, and casting back looks of anger and suspicion upon the Mask, the Colonel entered the study, and as he closed the door, gave way to the vehemence of his temper.

"Audacious villain! does he take you or me for a fool, that he should suppose you would closet yourself, or I permit it, with a fellow, an unknown vagabond form off the highway, and an assassin, for aught that's known of him? I wonder, Montgomery, at your patience!"

"My dear Tom, my patience is needed to make up for your want of it! I tell you, violent words are of no use at any time. I feel as much inclined as you do to suspect this man; but we shall never convict him, if he deserves chastisement, unless we hear what he has to say."

"You mean, then, to be fool enough to let him have his own way, and to cut your throat, or shoot you through the head, after his own fashion, do you? Very considerate, very kind indeed, upon my honour, to those who care for you."

"Nonsense, my good friend! sure you would never let it be said that old Montgomery could be frightened by a mask?"

"Pho! pho! you are not the sensible man I took you for," said Colonel Pennington, "if you talk in this manner. When a fellow has had as many balls whizzing about his ears as you have had, he need not much care what is said of his courage; at least he's a fool if he does—that's all. I tell you again, this rascal shall not have you to himself to do what he likes with—or my name's not Tom Pennington."

"Neither shall he, depend upon *that*," said the General, taking down a pair of pistols from a collection of arms that hung around the walls of the apartment; and now, let me not hear another syllable upon the subject."

The tone in which these words were spoken, and the manner that accompanied them, showed Colonel Pennington that all farther remonstrance would probably be vain; but, glad to see that his arguments (or rather his pertinacity) had awakened something like a spirit of precaution in his friend, he was determined not to yield the point entirely. Placing himself, therefore, in an easy chair, and leaning comfortably back in it, he remained for some minutes beat-

ing his finger on his lips as if to enforce silence on himself, and seemingly resolved not to move from his post. "Did you not hear me say that I would speak with the Mask in *this room*, Pennington?" said General Montgomery.

"To be sure I did; but what of that?"

"That you must leave it. Come, Tom! I feel all your friendship; but you must be guided by me in the present affair."

"And I suppose," said the Colonel, "you intend to talk with this rascal in the dark, Well, it's all of a piece—and if you will, you must; but you *shall* have lights, even if you put them out afterwards." So saying, he rang the bell with violence, and left the apartment, followed by General Montgomery.

When the door opened, the stranger rose from his seat which he occupied at the window; and as the last faint gleam of light streamed with a reddish glare from the West, the reflection of his cloak was returned upon the mask he wore, and gave it the appearance of a countenance of living flame. It was impossible not to start at the preternatural effect thus produced; and even General Montgomery paused as he was about to make known his compliance with the stranger's terms of conference.

"The very devil incarnate!" said Colonel Pennington aloud; but these words only served to recall the General to a recollection of what he was about to say.

"I am alone, Sir, and ready to hear whatever you have to communicate. We will wait till the servants bring lights, and I will then accompany you into the next room."

The mask bowed; lights were quickly brought; General Montgomery, pointing to the door of his study, motioned to the stranger to enter. Colonel Pennington's eye followed them as they left the room, and every instant his breath was drawn quicker and quicker as their steps receded from the spot where he stood. The Mask had already passed into the study, and General Montgomery was on the point of following, when, again overcome with an idea of the danger to which his friend was exposing himself, Colonel Pennington darted forward to arrest his entrance, and, once more remonstrate with him on his imprudence. The door closed against him; and as he heard the key turn in the lock, his hands fell, and he remained in silent vexation. "'Tis madness!—'tis worse—'tis wickedness!" he at length exclaimed, "to place his life in the power of a scoundrel, who comes on no honourable errand, or he would

need no such assumed mystery. Curses on my own folly, that I did not rip the disguise from off him!"

In vain did Colonel Pennington, when this burst of impetuosity and anxiety had subsided, endeavour to ascertain if the parties within were speaking in any tone that argued menace or defiance. The double door was closed, and not a sound of any kind escaped. "He will not be fool enough to remain silent, surely, if this fellow offer violence, either in his words or behaviour:—he is armed;—and I must hear the scuffle." And again Colonel Pennington was quiet. His impatience, however, soon returned: he took out his watch—"They have been there full twenty minutes!"—and, in increasing anxiety, he paced twice or thrice to the other end of the apartment, he looked again at his watch, and he compared it with the clock that stood by the fireplace. As the minutes passed on, his fears gained ground; and at length, when he had reckoned more than the half-hour since the General's disappearance, he walked straight to the study-door, and knocked loudly. "Did you call me, Montgomery?" This was repeated twice. The General came near enough to be heard; and in a calm tone of voice answered, "No, Tom; make yourself perfectly easy; I did not call."

Colonel Pennington's heart leaped for joy; and again for an interval his apprehensions subsided, but they returned as time went on and the conference still continued. It was in vain that he endeavoured to argue himself into a conviction that no violence could be intended General Montgomery, when immediate assistance was at hand to rescue him; the absurdity of any attempt of the kind had never once entered into his view of the affair; and though a really brave man, he had in this instance become the victim of a panic, which, to any common nerves or understanding, must have seemed perfectly chimerical.

At length, another half-hour elapsed, and neither Colonel Pennington's patience nor his fears could longer brook the uncertainty. He was too well aware of his friend's determination of character, to hope that he would acknowledge any influence which he had thought it right, in the first instance, to oppose; and though he might have quieted his own anxiety for the moment by a repetition of his inquiry at the study-door, he preferred another expedient, which he trusted might induce General Montgomery to put an end to the interview, and at once release him from the torment of suspense. The power Lady Emily possessed over her uncle was unbounded,

and Colonel Pennington bethought himself of her assistance at this juncture.

Walking hastily, therefore, to the end of the apartment, and opening the communication with the library, he called her by name: no one answered. He advanced into the room, but found no one. Again he called; and, unwilling to remove farther from the scene of his anxiety, continued repeating her name several times: still no answer. He stepped to the bell; at that instant, imagining he heard voices in a room adjoining, he hurried forward in the direction, and his hand was already on the lock, when a report, as of a pistol, echoed through the apartments. He started at the sound, and was hastening back to the spot he had quitted: at the same moment, several doors seemed to be opened and shut with great violence, and, full of alarm, he quickened his steps towards the study. That door was still closed. "For God's sake, Montgomery! I beseech you, open to me!"

The door was opened, and the General, pale and evidently much agitated, came forward to meet him. He endeavoured to smile, but the attempt was fruitless, and only gave a deeper expression to the gloom which overshadowed his usually radiant countenance. The sudden change was evident to Colonel Pennington, as with breathless anxiety he exclaimed, "Are you wounded—are you hurt—Montgomery? Where, where? tell me, I beseech you!"

"No, Pennington, no; my good friend, I am quite safe."

"But what have you done with the Mask?—where is he?"

"Gone," replied General Montgomery: and as he spoke he appeared to gasp for breath, and sunk exhausted into a chair.

"You are surely ill?" said Colonel Pennington, calling at the same time for assistance. "I implore you, tell me what has occurred—was any violence offered, tell me?"

"No, no," answered General Montgomery faintly; "I am only fatigued, Tom—I shall soon recover. Dismiss the servants when they come; and, as you value my peace, ask no farther questions."

Colonel Pennington drew a deep sigh at a request so unlike the open confidence which marked their usual intercourse; and as he gazed on his friend, he exclaimed inwardly, "'Tis strange—*how* strange!—and I am much to blame to have let it come to this. Montgomery," he added, "I must transgress your positive injunction; I must learn——"

At this moment, the servants, alarmed at Colonel Pennington's repeated calling for *assistance*, entered the apartment, and were

immediately followed by Lady Emily. "Dearest uncle," she said in a voice of agitation, and shocked at his altered looks, "I hear that a mysterious stranger has been with you, and your attendants have been sadly alarmed."

"My love, it is nothing—do not you be alarmed."

"It is but this moment that I learned the occurrence, or I had been with you long ago. Tell me, tell me, dearest uncle! what has happened; you are not well—I am certain you are not."

"Dearest, nothing has happened: a person came to speak to me, whose appearance has excited the curiosity of the servants; but nothing of any consequence has occurred; you see there has not."

"Oh dear, dear uncle! what you say has never hitherto been doubted by me; but you look as if something had happened to agitate you."

"Do I, love? it is your fancy. The tempest, maybe, has bewildered me with its noise:" and General Montgomery made an effort as he spoke, to raise himself from the chair, and, turning to the servants, inquired if much damage had been done during the storm. They answered in the affirmative, that one of the gables of the house had been much injured, and a stack of chimneys near it thrown down.

"Is any one hurt?" asked the General eagerly.

"No," was the reply.

"Then that was the crash that stunned us so, Pennington?" he added, appealing to the Colonel.

"*Yes*," was Colonel Pennington's answer; "I wish it had been the *only one* we had heard to-night."

General Montgomery took no notice of what was said, and continued his inquiries: "Are any of the trees injured?"

"Yes, Sir; the gardener has come in, and says many have had large branches torn off by the wind; and the great Methuselah is shivered to the roots by the lightning, and lies its length on the lawn."

"What! my favourite cedar, say you? Then has the storm beat upon my house, indeed!" and General Montgomery seemed to relapse again into a train of deep and painful reflection.

"It was a fearful storm," said Lady Emily, endeavouring to draw her uncle's attention. He looked up to her; but an expression of agony sat on his countenance, to which words would fail to give interpretation, and which made Emily start back in increased alarm; when, placing herself on her knees at his side, she continued to hold *his hand in speechless* anxiety, Colonel Pennington felt in his inmost

being all that passed, and both were preparing to speak, when General Montgomery said in a faint voice—" Dismiss these servants. Emily, dearest and best, retire. I have some business with Colonel Pennington, and do not think I shall have any whist to-night: make my apologies, and good night, sweet love! Bless thee," he added, kissing her forehead; and Lady Emily, impressed with a sense of awe for which she could not account, returned this farewell of affection, and departed.

Again left alone with General Montgomery, Colonel Pennington looked for some explanation of the mysterious visit of the Mask; but his anxiety rendered him impatient of even the short pause that followed Lady Emily leaving the room. " My dear Montgomery!" said he, " I must act in opposition to your commands, and ask you what means this agitation—this unusual and sudden change, apparent to every one, and which renders you so unlike yourself? Do not consider me, I beseech you, for the first time in our lives, unworthy of your confidence; repose in me the cause of your present pain of mind. You cannot deceive me." The General only sighed or rather groaned deeply. " I know, at the present moment," continued Colonel Pennington, " you are suffering from extreme mental anguish; and if long friendship can give me any claim, I think I deserve to be made acquainted with your grief; let me, if I cannot in any way alleviate, at least share it with you."

General Montgomery pressed the hand of Colonel Pennington warmly, as he replied—" My worthy and excellent friend, there is a mystery in this affair, which I am not at liberty to disclose to any living being; else, be assured there exists not the person in whose bosom I would more cheerfully confide my secret than yourself. Be satisfied with this assurance. I *cannot* divulge any thing of this night's transaction; ask me, therefore, no farther questions, for I cannot answer them; and from this hour will I never utter word upon the painful subject."

There was a quiet determination in the tone and manner of General Montgomery, from which his friend knew there was little chance of appeal; and he turned away with an ill-suppressed sigh of regret, and paced backwards and forwards in the room for some minutes, in deep silence. Then stopping suddenly, he questioned General Montgomery as to what he had done with his pistols; for he felt a conviction that the report he had heard, when in the library, proceeded from some sort of fire-arms, and by this inquiry he thought to obtain farther knowledge of the fact. " My pistols

are safe, Pennington, let that suffice: force me not to repeat in stronger terms my determination never to divulge aught more of this night's adventure than you already know; and you will best act the part of a friend, if you yield to my wishes and cease to urge me upon it."

"But the appearance of such a strange visitor is enough to make the whole parish talk! The servants——"

"If the servants gossip, or any one ask questions, I wish you to reply that it was an idle frolic to astound us; but not being relished, had better not be spoken of more. You will please me, Tom, and you may serve me by observing my request. And now good-night. I wish to be alone—I am better: and you may leave me safely. Go to my nieces and tell them so. Good-night."

"It is very strange," said Colonel Pennington, as he walked slowly out of the apartment; "it has no savour of good in it. It has been a stormy and dark night, and will usher in, I fear, a long and dreary day. It is strange," he went on repeating, as he advanced to the drawing-room, "passing strange!" and the events of the evening continued to pursue him long after he had sought oblivion on his pillow.

CHAPTER XIII.

Your most intimate friend, however dull, may be guilty of a statistical quarto; your youngest daughter may, unknown to you, write all the poetry for a magazine, besides having a volume of fragments in prose and verse, almost ready for publication. Oh! glorious days for the rag-gatherer and the paper-maker! Oh! lamentable days for the wings of the grey goose and the crow. PHANTASMAGORIA.

When Lord Mowbray took his sudden departure from the Hall, he betook himself to a villa he possessed on the banks of the Thames near Windsor. To this place he retired, with a firm intention to come to some resolution in regard to his future life. It was a sylvan scene of English beauty; and here he thought to lose sight of certain uneasy sensations, which recent events had forced irresistibly and involuntarily upon him. But we cannot fly from ourselves at the moment we wish it; and while he mused on the stream as it coursed along, now bending the heads of the bulrushes by its pressure, now buoying up the large circular leaves of the water-lily, whose blossom, like the Naiad queen of the element, floated on its surface, he

drew a fanciful resemblance between these objects and himself. "My youth," he said, "where is it? hurrying fast away like the current of the river, and like it, soon to be swallowed up in the immeasurable ocean of eternity! My pursuits and prospects resemble only those reeds, now bent and changing in their direction, now showing an evanescent blossom, that depends for its support on an uncertain element, which bears but too apt an analogy to my own restless mind; for I too have cherished and supported some flowers that bloomed upon the surface of my precarious affections; but I have dealt rudely with their fragile texture, and they are sunk and overwhelmed."

Had any body told Lord Mowbray that he was poetising on life, he would have smiled in derision; but when the feelings are roused, the most torpid imagination becomes poetical, and, unknown to himself, he now looked upon existence from that height which renders the dullest view of it sublime. He saw, in his own character, the gifts of nature and of fortune despised, misused, squandered, contemned; he felt that he might have been a statesman, a warrior, a man of letters, or a Mæcenas; a patron, at least, of pursuits which, if he had not energy sufficient to prosecute, he had fortune enough to encourage, and he was deeply alive to their charm and influence. He felt within himself (nor was he mistaken in the feeling) the power of these many varied gifts; and he had essayed in turn the different careers which they opened; but, satisfied with the proof thus given to the world that he *might* have excelled in any that had been his choice, he withdrew from the competition abruptly, even as though he disdained the goal for which he had started.

In fact he did so, for there had been hitherto no preponderating power in his mind, no defined sense of moral obligation to fill the duties of his station, which could give efficacy or stability to his choice, or fix on Lord Mowbray's actions the stamp of character; the "*A quoi bon?*" which Madame de Stael has denounced as "*la plus vulgaire de tout les questions*," was the constant question with which he neutralized every attempt; and in truth, when there exists no motive superior to the transient ends of this world's cares, there cannot exist in any mind a sustaining principle to persevere in climbing the tiresome steeps of laudable ambition, or in pursuing the more blessed, but still more rugged paths of private duty.

The consciousness of this great want, in Lord Mowbray's instance, was gradually corroding while it hardened a naturally kind and generous heart. The pleasure of the passing hour, or rather

I should say, of its ease; the excitement of the moment's wit, which, like brilliant bubbles flung by children in the air, was gone as soon as called into existence: these had insensibly usurped the place of higher attainments and nobler pursuits, and supplied the votary of indolence and selfishness with all that was required to make life glide easily away.

Thus was Lord Mowbray in danger of being confirmed in habits which, though repugnant to his better reason, he had not sufficient strength of character successfully to combat, when the unexpected appearance of one who had lived with him at another period of his life, startled him from this half lethargic half sardonic state of being, and made him involuntarily exclaim, "Was I born for this?"

The Rev. Mr. Altamont was the visitor announced to Lord Mowbray—a person equally beloved by the gay and the grave; one whose varied talents made him the delight and soul of the society in which he lived; and whose powerful mind spread itself over a wide circle of influential bearings, and was ever directed to the support of the principles he professed; unwarped by interest, and unintimidated by rank or station. Those who envied his success through life, and were most inclined to depreciate the abilities and worth that had led to it, nevertheless, dared not openly avow their feelings; and, in his presence, were frequently beguiled into sentiments which, if not of friendship, were certainly those which the pleasure and amusement arising from Mr. Altamont's conversation, were sure to beget. Such was the man, whose noble port and beaming countenance recalled a crowd of past delights to Lord Mowbray's mind. "How very glad I am to see you, my dear Altamont!" cried Lord Mowbray, seizing his hand; "and to see you looking so well! Just the same as ever, I declare; somewhat fuller in person, it may be, but just the same expression, the same air!"

"Somewhat fuller, my dear Lord!" rejoined he, as he returned the affectionate pressure of his hand; "you have been studying French politeness, I perceive, since I had last the pleasure of meeting you, and season your observations with skill to the palate. Here I am, always the same in heart, at least, towards you."

"Well now, this is kind, my dear friend! to come thus, and take me for better for worse, just as you used to do in old times."

"Stop my good Lord; if you please *I* do not mean to take you for worse," (looking at him from head to foot,) "not I, truly; I hope I am taking you for what you ought to be—for better, 'Else, wherefore live we in a Christian land,' if time teaches us to no pur-

pose? But I am *frappé en haut*, as way say at Paris. I have attained to great perfection in the French idiom, you see; and now" (throwing himself into an easy chair) "I cannot moralize till I have refreshed myself with some of your good things." (Lord Mowbray instantly rang the bell). "I am fairly knocked up, my dear Lord, vulgarly so to speak; and I hope, therefore, you will allow me to put up here for the night?"

"Ay, for a hundred and one nights, and welcome!"

"Have a care what you are saying; for unless I could tell as many stories as Dinarzade, I think a hundred nights of my presence might put your friendship to the test; but, for half a dozen, who knows but it may be borne?"

And now followed all the bustle of servants, trunks, and postboys, the allotment of the sleeping-room, the preparations of the toilette, the drawing breath after the flutter of a first meeting, and then the returning sense of unbroken enjoyment in an old friend's society. When all these impediments were removed, the table cleared, and the attendants gone, nothing remained to check conversation, or prevent the mutual interchange of thought. "Well," said Mr. Altamont, when he had thus arrived at the acme of English comfort, and filling his glass with claret; "I drink to you, my dear Lord, and give you joy of not being in the least *improved*, as it is called, by your residence in foreign lands—your long residence—your too long residence there."

"Why too long, my good friend?"

"In the first place, *too long*, because I dreaded seeing you grown into something that was not of English growth; and, let me tell you, that will not do for a man of your consequence, and your responsibility—there, do not smile so jesuitically—look at me straightforward while I tell you, it won't do for any Englishman; but, as far as I can judge, you have '*escaped it beautifully.*'"

Lord Mowbray continued to smile in despite of his friend's prohibition. "There are some people, my good Sir," he said, "who always remain the same in all places, and in all countries; better does not mend them, and worse does not mar them—to tell you the truth, I suspect I am one of these."

"There now, there spoke the very boy I knew fifteen years ago; but come, we will not dispute this point at present. I don't agree with your sophistical axiom; but, because *it is yours*, I won't dispute it, though I know it is nonsense (you'll excuse me). Another glass of claret, if you please, while it is cool—ha—that's good!

better, I am sure, you never tasted than this, on the lands where the grapes grew. Those foreigners send every thing that they have, that is worth having, over to us. Why should we be at the trouble to go to them for it?"

"I wish they could send us their climate," said Lord Mowbray, shivering, and drawing his chair towards the fire: "think of being obliged to have a fire in June—and look at that mizzling drizzling rain!"

"Don't look at it: shut it out; vote it winter, and then what does it signify? Nay, it is more agreeable; it makes a greater variety, and one has an excuse for candle-light and a blazing fire, than which nothing is better, especially when accompanied by a glass of Burgundy or claret; then we have *la belle France* in *la comfortable* England both together; for, though I give France leave to come to England, hang me if England shall ever go to France with my leave."

"Well, my dear Altamont, nobody is talking of endeavouring to make the attempt."

"I am glad of it, I am glad of it with all my heart: and so what are you going to do?"

"I going to do?—any thing—nothing—as I have always done."

"Pshaw, my dear Lord, this language is obsolete—don't let us have any more of it: a man like you, in your situation, must be at the head of a party; your sovereign and your country demand your support."

"I stand at the head of a party?—No, no! People may be gulled by impudence, but they are not fools enough to be so when there is neither that commodity nor ability of any other kind; then how can I pretend to such an eminence without having climbed the preparatory steep? Impossible! And as for cringing to this man of power, and t'other man of talent, to get a lift on their wings—more impossible still!"

"But if you do not choose to shine in the senate, why not support the public interest by your pen?"

"What! I become a man of letters; I, who have a positive *pen-and-inky phobia!* Worse and worse: you give me the headache but to think of it. Besides, that too requires an apprenticeship; and at my time of life! no, not though it were to be indentured seven years to the muses themselves. And then a lord's or a lady's writings are but poor things, after all; with a few, very few exceptions, liable to the just criticism of every idle and superficial reader.

No, Altamont; I have too thin a skin to try that experiment: people always make fools of themselves when they step out of their sphere."

"You reason wrong, my good Lord, like the mad people, from right premises; but granted that you do not choose to be a statesman or an author, you may yet be that most dignified, and perhaps happiest of all beings, a great man living on your estates and dispensing happiness around you—that would not be going out of your sphere."

"At least, I should be stepping very much out of the sphere of my inclinations if I looked after poor-rates and road-bills, and parish business, and county meetings. Why the bare enumeration of these delectable duties and pleasures give me the vapours. What then is left for me to do, a poor insignificant reptile, crawling out my little day of life, and fancying, for a moment, that it matters *how* I do it: whether, like that jolly fly who is now sipping my wine, or like my good hound, dreaming over his chase after a rabbit?"

"When you are a fly, or a hound, that may be all very well; but if you—a man—a man with good abilities, a man born to a high station, endowed with large property, choose to liken yourself to an insect, or a mere animal, you must, my good Lord, make up your mind to fall lower than either in the estimation of your fellow-beings and in the scale of creation. It will not do, my Lord Mowbray, it will not do at all; I put my strong dissent upon every word you have been pleased to utter, and I am perfectly aware that your mind is diseased. Allow me to feel your pulse" (affecting to take out his watch)—"now every patient confides in his physician—suffer me to feel the pulsations of your heart, and then I will tell you what makes you talk so much nonsense—you'll excuse me."

At this moment, a letter was brought in by a servant.—"I thought," said Lord Mowbray peevishly, taking the letter, "that I had at least escaped this plague till to-morrow's post-time."

"Well, while you, my Lord, are perusing your epistle, I will, if you allow me, retire to the drawing-room, where I conclude I shall find materials for writing one of those very things called letters, to which you have so great an aversion." Lord Mowbray nodded assent; and being left alone, he turned the paper in his hand, and looked for the post-mark: there was none; turned it round and round; at last broke the seal, and saw a clear small character, which at once bespoke it to be a female's writing. He glanced his eye over the first page; looked into the second; still it was closely written:

that, too, ensured its being a woman's letter. He looked for the signature; there was none.

The letter stated a case of some interest:—A woman, whose prospects in life were fair, but whose fate had been the reverse; who, now houseless, and driven by the cruelty of near relations from the only home which ever had been hers, was become a wanderer on the face of the earth, had seized upon the first idea which presented itself to her for relief; namely, to write a book. She declared herself to be totally ignorant of any scientific or deep attainment; was not even sure that she wrote any language correctly, and had not yet determined what sort of book to write. Travels were disregarded, unless the name of the traveller were prefixed to the page. Biography required too much research, too much knowledge of human character in general, for a person who had only moved in one particular circle; precluded from consulting any books of reference, alike from her peculiar situation and the fear of being laughed at for pretending to be wise. History, except that of "Goody Two Shoes" and "Jack the Giant-Killer," entirely beyond her ken. Still she declared she felt, that out of her own heart's stores alone she could draw materials that would not be devoid of a particular species of interest. All she requested was—permission to dedicate her work to some person whose name would ensure it success. Would his Lordship permit an unknown to avail herself of the undoubted advantage which *his* would confer on one so insignificant? without some such aid, she had no chance whatever of attaining her end: and he, by granting her request, would be doing a greater charity than by bestowing hundreds. "Do not offer me money," the letter concluded, "for though I am a beggar, I have a pride in my heart which would render its acceptance impossible. If you are condescending enough to answer this, direct A. B., post-office, Windsor."

"A curious letter," thought Lord Mowbray, "but not devoid of a sort of charm—quite a woman's letter—and that is no poor praise either. Shall I do what she wishes? or shall I refuse? What if the work should be disgraceful—foolish—impertinent? I shall be pointed at: but, after all, what does it signify? And if I am laughed at, is there any body that is not laughed at? And who is the worse for that? Only those who are fools enough to fret about it. But I will ask Altamont what he thinks. No, I will not either; for if I do, I must take his advice, or act in opposition to it, it may be. Am I still so much of a boy that I cannot act for myself?"

He took up the letter and read it over again, half intending to tear it in pieces, and take no farther notice of it:—but the characters were fair and feminine—and the style bore the impress of being a female's, apart from all masculine pretension,—a circumstance which is at once so winning and so soothing to the natural pride of man. It breathed, it is true, a spirit of independence; but it was a womanly independence; professing only to assert its right to those powers allowed by man to the weaker sex; not that sword-and-pistol independence, which arrays a female in an attire foreign to her nature, and which at once, whether in argument, or in the display of knowledge, or in the declaration of sentiments, however just or well-supported, never fails to abrogate her right over the heart. When a woman ceases to be remembered as a woman, she lays down her highest claim to consideration, and can assume none other that will supply its place. In the present instance, there was a kind of compelling gentleness in the letter before him, which held a magic power over Lord Mowbray. "No," he said, walking up and down and thinking, aloud; "it would be unmanly, unnatural, to disappoint this woman; and, after all, there are other lords in the world to whom she might have addressed this request. What can make her give the preference to *me?*"

In Lord Mowbray's character there was a strange mixture of vanity and humility, which at first sight appeared quite contradictory, but which, nevertheless, often meets in the same person. The fact is, he felt pleased at having been selected by the unknown; and, yielding to the kindly impulse of his nature, as well as to that excited by self-love, he wrote a few gracious lines of permission, and sent off his answer directly.

No sooner was this done than he repented him of the deed, resumed his perambulations in the apartment, and began figuring to himself the appearance of the person in whose favour he had come to this decision. Was she young? was she beautiful? Interesting she certainly was from her history; the secret she affected would undoubtedly transpire. All such secrets always do. "*Tôt ou tard tout se sçait;*" and it would be pleasant enough to be the patron of a lovely young creature, whom his charity had saved from want; and then he would have conferred an obligation for which she would be grateful. Grateful! pshaw; what boots it to disguise the truth? turn it which way one may, *rien pour rien dans ce monde*, and gratitude is only one feeling given in exchange for another. But what if the unknown prove to be an old and disagreeable woman? He

glanced again at the letter,—"No, no; in a handwriting it is always possible to trace some analogy to the appearance and the character of the writer; at least, I have always thought so; and there is nothing, I am sure, that is disagreeable here. I feel certain that I have a good chance in this unknown of finding my conjectures right; perhaps, too, her society may prove as sweet as that I once enjoyed through a chance almost as vague as this. "*As sweet?*"—and Lord Mowbray drew a long and impeded respiration—"No; these things never occur twice in a lifetime: I wish they had never occurred at all. I will go to Altamont; he may drive all these things out of my head."

When Lord Mowbray rejoined Mr. Altamont, he found him seated at the piano-forte in the music-room. "Ah!" said the former, "how delightful to hear the tones of music, after our ears have undergone a fast from sweet sounds. Do not cease from playing! Convey me back to youth—to uncertainty—to health!"

"Gladly to the latter. Youth has not yet escaped you; and surely, my dear Lord, uncertainty is to you a kind of chartered freehold that I heartily wish you would get rid of. But if you like to hear some old tunes, now is your time: the fit is on me. I wish it could take the fit out of you—who knows?"

Among Mr. Altamont's varied gifts, he possessed in a supreme degree the art of *improvisèing* sweet sounds. For a man, and one of his high attainments and sacred profession, it might be deemed a minor talent. Had any one else possessed it, it would have been considered a title quite sufficient for fame. As it was, it stood eclipsed by the many intellectual powers of a higher order, which this accomplished man possessed; and it was known by and displayed only to those who shared his social hours. The present, was one of Mr. Altamont's happiest moments of inspiration. He led the ear of the listener through a vast variety of complicated harmony, till he fixed it on some well-known simple melody, the familiar sweetness of which awoke a thousand fond recollections, and possessed that universal power which in a numerous circle would have spoken to the particular feelings dearest to the heart of each individual hearer. There were moments when he occasionally varied the solemnity and refinement of his conceptions, by passing off into a buffo strain, that would have delighted the best Italian composers in that line, while it amused all who only knew to regard it as matter of drollery.

After indulging for a few instants in one of those capricios, Lord Mowbray observed, "Well you only prove to me what I always felt

and thought—that there is no music equal to Italian music, since even your caricature of it is superior to every other; it is the shadow which proves the substance true, you know."

All a prejudice, my good friend; very well in its way, but music is music when good of its kind, and the test of that is it speaking to the feelings. Was there ever a finer air, one more touchingly, more intensely sweet, than our own 'Cease rude Boreas,' when played with due expression? And now I am upon national airs, why do I name secondly that which ought to have stood first? 'God save the King.' I maintain, that whenever an Englishman, whose heart's in the right place, hears that noble strain, his breast will swell with loyalty and love. To complete the trio, 'Rule Britannia.' There's liberty for you, true, rational liberty and patriotism—'King, Lords, and Commons for ever!'" And with all the fire of his own enthusiastic feelings, Mr. Altamont gave these airs in their true spirit of love and glory. "I wish I were as young as you," said Lord Mowbray, with a melancholy smile: "but I cannot give up the supremacy of Italian music over every other, for all that; an ear once formed upon it, can never like any other so well."

"Pho! pho! don't tell me so—the more's the pity—the more's the pity—but there is nothing in any country under the sun better than what is to be found in England." And then again he struck up 'Rule Britannia' with all the majesty of that commanding strain.

"But come," he said, breaking off suddenly, "I forgot; you are sick of some outlandish disease, and I must positively get at the root of the evil:" so rising from the pianoforte, he placed himself opposite to Lord Mowbray.

"I must positively know your disease, my dear Lord," looking at him with friendly earnestness; "come, tell me what ails you, and then I will prescribe."

Lord Mowbray could not choose but laugh. "Laughing's a good thing, but won't do always: come, tell me what *is* the matter with you, my good friend?"

"Too much beef," replied Lord Mowbray; and he drew a long and heavy sigh, took two or three turns to and fro through the room, then stopped opposite to Mr. Altamont: "life is so different in different places, that were I to describe mine to you, while in that land of enchantment—Italy, I should appear like a madman in your eyes—perhaps in my own; and, besides, I do not know that I like to go over my Italian life even in description."

"How so? would it be too good or *too bad* to bear description?"

"Something, it may be of both; at all events, it is so diametrically opposite to every thing one does or thinks, or feels here, that it would be like talking of what one did in some other world."

"Well, my dear Lord, if in my happy ignorance of foreign countries and foreign manners, and *foreigners*, I enjoy my own people in my own land, with a sort of satisfied felicity, to which you are a stranger, by your own account; at least, I can hardly wish to exchange my dulness for your enlightened view of things; but what I do wish to know, is, how you, individually, passed your time in Italy, and with whom? There now, fancy this room a painted church, this great arm-chair a confessional, only don't fancy me a monk; I leave your imagination to supply this defect in the illusion as best it may."

Lord Mowbray could not help smiling, but it was a sad smile. "Now whisper to me all your adventures: you must have had a dozen Flirtations at least, five-and-forty escapes from banditti, and as many abductions from convents."

"*One Flirtation only.*"

"I am sorry for that; the word seems to change its meaning in the singular. Humph! One Flirtation only! worse than I thought for. I don't like that; I should not like at all a black and yellow Lady Mowbray, though her eye-brows were as arched and as fine as Rosalinda's, or her eyes like a gazelle's."

"My Flirtation, nevertheless, was with Rosalinda."

"The deuce it was! so much the worse. Well, now you have begun to break the ice, don't stop—don't let the aperture freeze over again; *it is only the first step which cuts!* But, in short, you will believe, for you know that whatever predilection I have for laughing, instead of crying, I *can* be serious."

"What would you have me do? you cannot help me, Altamont!"

"Confide in me, my dear Lord," affectionately and earnestly grasping Lord Mowbray's hand; "for I am truly interested in all that concerns you."

Lord Mowbray swallowed a sort of sigh, passed his fingers through his hair, leant back deep into his chair, and then spoke rapidly in a low and indistinct voice, like a man who is compelled to narrate something which presses on his mind, of which he would gladly disburthen it; but which, nevertheless, he cannot endure to disclose.

CHAPTER XIV.

Oh! felice chi mai non pose il piede,
Fuori della natia sua dolce terra;
Egli il cor mon lascio fitto in ogetti
Che di più riveder non ha speranza;
E cio che vive ancor, morto non piange. PINDEMONTE.

"In the month of July," said Lord Mowbray, "the great heats render a residence at Naples insufferable; and the noise of the streets throughout the night as well as day makes it perfect Pandemonium. The vaunted clearness of the sky no longer exists. The Bruma di Mare—"

"That again in English, if you please, my Lord, means—?"

"The mists that lie on the sea, which are often so dense that they conceal Vesuvius from its base to its summit; and Capri, that beautiful island, at the entrance of the bay, which seems to stand forth as a champion to the unrivalled charms of the parent city, is totally obscured."

"And this," interrupted Mr. Altamont again, who was delighted to find something to abuse in all of foreign kind, "is your vaunted blue heaven. I am happy to hear it with all my heart."

"This is the case during a short period, or may occur at intervals; but when it does, one goes to Castella Mare, to Sorrento, to Ischia; all of them retreats, which offer a paradise to the enchanted senses. On quitting Naples, it will be two years next month, I chose the first mentioned of these places. Lying under a brow of the Sorrento coast, it is shaded from the sun, and affords in its mountain paths every luxurious and beautiful situation which the eye can wish for, or the mind desire to contemplate. There is too in its climate a refreshing coolness, which is unlike all the damp airs, so called in this country; and, after the suffocation and glare of the capital, proves indescribably delightful. It was with great satisfaction that I found very few of my countrymen settled at this spot."

"Your Lordship surely mistakes; for satisfaction read affliction:—but no—very true; I stand corrected. It is only the worst portion of the English community who reside abroad; the present company always excepted."

Lord Mowbray smiled and resumed his narrative:—"A few regular sight-hunters, who were too busily engaged doing nothing, as

all people are who follow that sport, did not impede my comfort much; once or twice they invited me to join their *coteries* and be 'sociable,' as they termed it: but, as I excused myself somewhat peremptorily, in order to avoid a repetition of giving offence, they voted me, according to the phraseology of one of the young ladies, a *philanthropist*,—that is, I presume, a misanthropist; and I was left at liberty to follow my own devices as I willed. I was known by the name of *the* strange *Englishman*. My voluntary seclusion made my time completely my own. For my favourite pursuit, sketching, I had ample leisure and ample subject. I found every thing adapted to picture, seldom any thing to reject or change, as though Nature had combined her elements in this enchanted region for the very express purpose of the painter. No overwhelming feature of greatness usurped undue space or interest in the scene; but a harmony of scale reigned in all the parts. An outline undulated through all the forms, such as the classic Poussin must have delighted to trace; and how often have I recognised the groundwork of his finest subjects on this spot, while a colour, such as the pencil of Claude alone has reached, would be spread over the whole, and leave the senses to repose in unmixed delight and ecstasy upon the glories of the Italian world! Yet do not the glories that I speak of pall upon the sense by their luxuriance, any more than they strike upon it at first by the wonderment they create. Wonder is not the homage which we pay to the most refined and perfect objects; neither is it the sensation most grateful to our own breasts; but the consciousness of an increasing and ever renovated charm, which 'grows by what it feeds on,' *that* is the test of true superiority in the object we contemplate."

"I should like to see Italy," said Mr. Altamont involuntarily; "let us go."

Lord Mowbray smiled, and shook his head—"Go, and *feel* Italy, and then you will never be happy out of it."

"Not for the world, then, would I go; if I am to believe you. No, no! I will not stir on any account; there is nothing like England!"

"When I had pretty well exhausted Castella Mare (the expression is a wrong one), I mean to say, when I wished to explore fresh beauties, I gave my people orders to arrange my baggage; for I never learnt to do without it, though there is always more than is necessary, and always more plague than pleasure in it, and desired them to go by sea to Sorrento, I myself purposing to take the mountain path, across a chain of hills that skirts the coast, and with

a couple of half-naked Lazzaroni, who are to be caught at all hours for a few paolis——"

"That, again, 'done into English,' I conclude means ragamuffins. You'll excuse me, but I don't like larding the English tongue with useless foreign phrases."

"Well, a couple of these ragamuffins, if you choose them to be so called, were found as readily as you may catch a pony in the highlands of Scotland with a handful of oats, to accompany me as my guides and carry my portfolio. I took my gun, and, with my faithful Flora there, proceeded across the mountains. At first there was a kind of path apparent; but gradually this was lost in brushwood of wild myrtle, gum-cistus, and innumerable odoriferous shrubs, and soon became difficult and impracticable by reason of huge pieces of broken rock that lay piled upon each other and seemed to forbid all progress; but my scrambling guides, jumping from one projecting fragment to another, as from so many convenient stepping-stones, cried out continually, '*Ecco la Strada! ecco la Strada!* and I was obliged to follow for mere shame, although I have no love of what is called exercise, and never could fancy any pleasure in possessing the agility of a goat. But there was no choice; it was as bad to return as to proceed: besides, I had sent on my baggage; and that was a sort of trammel which, as I have before said, I was too much of an Englishman to do without." Mr. Altamont rubbed his hands with pleasure at this confession.

"When I reached the highest point of my journey, I stopped to look around me and enjoy the fruits of my toils. It was a glorious sight that met my view;—fragments of rocks, and masses of cinders, and other matter which had once been ignited, lay piled in heaps at my feet, intermingled with such luxuriance of vegetation, that these objects alone might have afforded delight and interest; while the spicy exhalations they diffused, intermingled with the luscious perfume of the orange-groves from Sorrento, wafted at intervals on the breeze, produced an inebriating and overpowering influence upon the senses. I sat down and enjoyed myself, in the full meaning of the word; and remained so long absorbed in thoughts, too rapid, too various to be defined, (although the recollection that I *was* thinking is still fresh in my memory), that at last my guides reminded me that if I did not quicken my footsteps I should fail of reaching my destination. 'Never mind!' was my reply. It is one of the delights of Italy, that one never does mind time and circumstance; one seems enfranchised *from* all the minor lets and hindrances which

are constantly crossing the path of existence *here*, and arresting our most innocent enjoyments."

"False! false! my good Lord: it sounds romantic and fine; but it is all nonsense. You'll excuse me. We are all the better for being kept in order, and relaxation is only innocent when it follows duty. But pray proceed."

Lord Mowbray, without adverting to his friend's observations, continued speaking, like a man who is recreating his own fancy by returning in idea to past scenes of happiness. "On one of the highest parts of the mountain, with the sea sleeping at its base, intensely blue, the wing-like sail, made small by distance, glittering in the last setting rays of the sun as it sank behind Vesuvius—Vesuvius itself, darkly grand in shadow, and emitting from time to time volumes of pyramidal smoke, which came hurrying forth from the mouth of the crater, black as Erebus,——"

"Just like a glass-house, I suppose," interrupted Mr. Altamont.

"And then fading gradually through a succession of gray tints, as it rose and rested like a filmy veil in the air. It was in a scene like this, and indulging in visionary speculations, such as the objects before me were calculated to inspire, that I sat musing, when the slight, moaning growl of Flora, who was cowering at my feet, caught my attention. I looked around; and, in a recess formed by the encircling masses of rocks, some little distance in the descent, I perceived a female asleep; at the same moment, above her head, I beheld a snake rearing and coiling itself in spiral folds, and, with a trembling vibration and prominent crest, gloating upon and ready to seize its prey. The reptile, was, as I afterwards learnt, one of the constrictor species, not unfrequently found in Southern Italy, and which destroy their victims by strangling. I sprang on my feet, and for an instant was stupified. My presence of mind forsook me. I was powerless; but Flora repeated her warning, and the reptile's attention seemed drawn to the dog, for, before I could rush forward, it recoiled with a hiss, and was soon lost to my eye in the thick mass of entangled brushwood that covered the spot.

"Flora continued advancing, barking triumphantly, as she perceived her antagonist retreat. The sounds awoke the sleeper. I approached, and explanation ensued: but her expressions of gratitude were so vivid that they overpowered me, more particularly as I felt I had no share in the preservation of her life, and that Providence alone had interposed. I was distressed beyond measure *at thus receiving* acknowledgments which I did not merit; and all

I could say was, that it was fortunate—it was providential; for at one time I had intended to send Flora by sea, and certainly her interference had been the cause of the timely discovery.

"'Ah!' she replied in a voice, the sweetness of which could only be equalled by the language she spoke, and the perfection and choice of phrase in which it was spoken; 'you are an Englishman—that trait alone proves it. Where one of another nation would avail himself of the circumstance which has now occurred, to enhance his claim to notice, it is the character of *your* countrymen to evade even the due expression of grateful acknowledgment. Is this pride, which will not be repaid even by words; or a generous disdain of praise as the reward of an action which appears (as you would imply in the present instance) too simple to call forth such a sentiment?'"

"A philosophical Sleeping Beauty of the Wood, upon my word!" cried Mr. Altamont; "a got-up scene for effect, I am afraid. Are you sure the snake was a real one?"

"You may be sure that this person, from her appearance and manner, as well as from the circumstance of our extraordinary meeting, excited in me as much curiosity as it does in you, Altamont, to know who she was; and I ventured, as soon as her reiterated expressions of obligation allowed me opportunity, to inquire if I could render her farther service, by conducting her in safety to her home. She thanked me, as she added, 'I live near Sorrento; we are not above a mile from my palace. I had been beguiled by the beauty of the evening, to wander from my gardens farther than I intended; and, overcome by fatigue, proposed to rest under covert of yonder rocks, while I bade my attendants await my call.' I observed that it was a most unusual exertion for one of her country and appearance. 'True!' she said, 'but I am not guided by usages. Will you allow your guides to seek my attendants? It grows late, and the anxiety of friends, who expect me at the accustomed hour of meeting, will lead them to wonder at my absence.'

"My two guides proceeded in different directions, shouting, in the harsh tones of the Neapolitan dialect, for the servants of this fair unknown; who were, with some difficulty, discovered, and roused from the slumbers in which, like their mistress, they had indulged; for an Italian alway finds a refuge from *ennui* in sleep, which he commands at almost any hour in the four-and-twenty; and it is invariably the resource of the multiplied dependants of the ante-room, who in that country form, as it were, so many escutcheons of pretence in the halls of their employers.

"Accustomed as my eye had become to the splendour and gaudiness of this nation in their establishments, I was surprised to observe the peculiarly magnificent dresses of the two attendants, who now approached their mistress, making their excuse, and felicitating her after the fashion of the country, although in a more familiar manner than we Englishmen would understand, on her providential rescue; in the same breath, and in equally extravagant terms, blaming their own negligence in quitting her, and extolling my happy interference at the moment when her life would have fallen a sacrifice. The lady's page, whose ebony complexion appeared in all the powerful contrast which his turban of white, studded with precious stones, and his long ear-drops of turquoise could give to it, gathered up his mistress's shawls from the spot where she had lain; and she herself addressing me, as she rested her hand on the shoulder of her other attendant, and stood preparing to descend the path, inquired if I also were not going towards Sorrento. The expression which accompanied her words, conveyed to my mind almost an invitation; and if I had been journeying in the contrary direction, I doubt not I had turned back."

"Oh! I'll be bound to say you would, my dear Lord!" replied Mr. Altamont; "you'd have gone if she had told you to walk on your head thither, or have tumbled before her all the way, like the fool (you'll excuse me) in the pantomime."

"Well, she moved quickly on, as I acknowledged that my intentions were to proceed to Sorrento, and, with a light elastic step, bounded over all the difficulties and impediments in the road. But little progress could be made in our acquaintance so long as attention was requisite to the extreme intricacy of our path; but as we descended and reached the Pianura of Sorrento, the way gradually became less rugged, and I was enabled to join my companion. Dismissing the attendant who had hitherto served her for support, she continued the route with myself only at her side, and I was already becoming more and more fascinated with the charms and intelligence which her manners and conversation developed, when a buzz of voices, apparently little distant from us, announced the approach of a numerous assemblage of persons.

"'They are surely my acquaintance,' said my companion, listening, 'who, alarmed at my unusual absence, and learning the direction I had taken, have come in quest of me; let us hasten to meet them.'

"*So saying,* she sprang forward; and, calling to her page at the

same moment, bid him hasten and acquaint the party of her near approach. We soon met, and it would be impossible for me to describe the vivacity and animation of the scene which took place. There were such greetings, such kissing of hands, such inquiries for the cause of absence, that one, unaccustomed to the manners of the country, would have thought the object of them had been separated, during some painful interval, from persons of the dearest kindred to her.

"But exaggerated as their expressions and gestures sometimes appear to us, the Italians are not insincere; they are a people of strong feeling: they are naturally given to warm expressions of attachment; and though to a phlegmatic Englishman the cause may seem often too trivial, which calls forth their demonstrations of pleasure; yet we ought not to judge them by our own measured mode of phrase and cautious profession; nevertheless, however, I felt that the persons before me were of a nature so inferior to the being to whom they thus paid homage, that I was impatient of their attentions; and, half displeased with an interruption which seemed likely to deprive me of an opportunity of knowing more of my companion, I prepared abruptly to take my leave, excusing myself on the plea of the presence of her friends, to whom I resigned the charge, which good fortune had placed for a few happy moments in my hands.

"Rosalinda (for it *was* Rosalinda, as you may have already imagined), chided my wish to absent myself, and pressed me to her palace, as my home during my visit to Sorrento; she looked, at least I thought so, reproachfully, as I declined her earnest entreaties to be her guest; and when I persisted in taking my leave, I did so half reluctantly, half angry with myself for rejecting an offer which, a few minutes before, I should have embraced with the liveliest pleasure imaginable. But I was out of humour with the crowd that surrounded her; and at length became so with myself, and all the circumstances of the evening's rencontre; and, again making my excuses, I bowed and passed on. From one of those contradictory impulses, however, under which it appears I am always doomed to act, the farther I advanced, the greater was my inclination to return and accept the proffered invitation. But still I pursued my way; and, entering Sorrento, was soon established quietly in the apartments which my people had got ready for my arrival.

"On the morrow, while debating with myself whether to renew the acquaintance of the preceding evening, or leave it where it was,

and questioning at one moment the propriety of doing so on the score of etiquette (*not* of prudence, I confess), and at the next, feeling Rosalinda's invitation sufficient to authorize my inquiries at her palace door, I was released from all doubts and perplexities on the subject by the announcement of a gentleman, who came, on her part, to inquire for me.

"As he entered the apartment, I recognized one of the party who had contributed, in my mind, to disturb the enjoyment of my evening's adventure; and had I not been rejoiced at an interposition so favourable to my wishes, it is probable my chagrin at the visit had shown itself in some coldness and reserve; but the frankness with which he accosted me, joined to his very earnest manner, as he repeated Rosalinda's invitation to make her palace my home, would of itself have dispelled any cloud of previous dissatisfaction; and, not to tire you, my dear Altamont, with farther detail than is necessary——"

"Oh, my dear Lord, be assured I can fill up any hiatus in your pretty story; I can see it all *now;* but go on. I like to hear how *very clever* these Italian ladies are, and how very—but pray proceed, my dear Lord; I would not deprive you of living over again any of those past happy moments; I only hope, they *are past.*"

"Well, then, I yielded to the invitation, and proceeded with this kindly and warm-hearted envoy, at once, to Rosalinda's residence. In a few hours, I was as comfortably and completely established there as if it had been my habitation for as many months; but, with the novelty of my situation, the pleasures arising from Rosalinda's society soon began to wear away, impeded and interrupted, as it was, by a constant throng of attendants and followers, who beset her path from dawn till night. There was not an excursion, not even a casual wandering amidst the beauties of nature around her dwelling, which seemed of themselves to invite tranquillity, and a seclusion from the world, that was free from interruption, or that could be enjoyed in the mutual society of herself, and the person whom she had, to all appearance, selected in preference to every other. I wondered each day more and more at the character of the being with whom I was associated; and though my impatience increased in proportion as I found her permitting the intrusion of individuals, who, however estimable, were still her inferiors in intellectual qualities, I had not the power nor the courage to break the silken tie which held me, nor yet the pride to refuse what I have *owned I felt to be* a divided interest.

"The time came at last, however, when I could endure this state of existence no longer, and I spoke openly to Rosalinda my opinion of the train of idle followers who continually surrounded her. She seemed thoughtful; but answered me with gentleness, and admitted that perhaps I had reason to despise her companions as being inferior to myself in intellect and acquirements. 'Yet, if you knew their kindliness of disposition,' she added, 'if you could read and understand their affectionate hearts—if you could bear with the harmless ebullition of their feelings and expressions of attachment for myself, and take their words and actions for what they are, the offsprings of guileless and unsophisticated nature, I am convinced you would judge the characters of my friends with less severity. You would abate a little of the contempt you are now disposed to feel for them. The homage of unfeigned admiration, too, which they profess for yourself, surely would disarm censure, even if no reciprocal feeling was engendered from it. But there is one, amongst the many who are thus devoted to me, whom, notwithstanding your fastidiousness, I am sure you would approve, were he here; I trust he will not linger long before he joins us, and then——'

"'What another!' I said with impatience, and not disguising my displeasure. Rosalinda smiled as she added, 'I will speak no more in his praise, since you seem unwilling to hear me, but will leave himself to prove whether I have judged amiss in supposing you would find him suited to, and worthy of yourself.'

"I determined, in consequence of this conversation, to abandon Rosalinda's society; and, to avoid the embarrassment of bidding her adieu, as well as the entreaties which I knew would be used to deter me from my purpose, I gave orders to my servants once more to proceed to sea, and with as much secrecy as possible reach the destination I pointed out, meaning myself to follow the line of the coast, and gain the picturesque and interesting port of Amalfi. My departure was silently taken, and no obstacle occurred to my quitting Sorrento in the manner I wished. One of the natives of the place being easily found to act as my guide, and conduct me through the various sinuosities of the shore which I intended traversing, I continued my walk for some miles, now in the midst of olive woods that clothed the valleys and gorges of the cliff, now mounting on the summit of some bold projecting point that overhung the still and azure waters of the Mediterranean; from whence the eye wandered to the site of Naples, and of Baiæ, to the promontory

of Misenus, and the more distant islands of Procida and Ischia; and returned from the contemplation of their dazzling glories, only to dwell with more quiet satisfaction upon the humble fishing hamlet on the shore beneath, or on some retiring convent that lay bedded in the surrounding cliffs, and half hid in groves of orange and citron-trees: dwellings of man, that afforded fit emblems of a peace and security, which the outstretched regions beyond, with all their charms, and in their brightest days, had never known.

"I forgot, however, dear Altamont, while I am dwelling on scenes which have so much interest for me, that you must, by this time, be tired of my powers of description, and I will pass them all by for the future, with the exception, however, of one spot, which is connected with my narrative, and which, from the evidence it affords of the singular truth in the pictures given us by Roman poets of the scenery of their country, I must, in its proper place, beg you to listen to; for I know you are an admirer of the *ancient* inhabitants of Italy and of their works, if you are not of those who possess the land at the present day."

"Yes," observed Altamont, "the modern Italians bear about as much resemblance to the ancient Romans, as your Rosalinda does to the Cornelias and Portias of other times. I beg your pardon—you'll excuse me—proceed."

"I lingered on my road," continued Lord Mowbray, "enchanted by the various beauties which on every side met me, and forgot that my place of destination was yet many miles distant, and that I should with difficulty reach it before nightfall. I inquired, therefore, of my guide, how far we were from Massa, a small town at the extreme point of the bay; and partly from a desire to return again to some particular spots in the path I had quitted, and partly from the fear of being unable to reach Amalfi while daylight lasted, I determined on seeking shelter among the fishermen's houses, at the former place, and to indulge in fresh contemplation, on the morrow, of the scenes I had passed; for I found the works of Nature and my portfolio the best means of diverting my mind from a subject, which had I dwelt upon, my resolutions of seeing Rosalinda no more would have proved quite in vain.

"Three days had elapsed since my quitting Sorrento, and I still lingered in its environs, secure in the secluded retreat I had chosen, and the unfrequented paths which I trod. My portfolio will witness for me that I was not idle, and the beauties of the scenes *which held me captive* there, inadequately as they are rendered by

my pencil, will remove, I am sure, every suspicion you may entertain of the motives of my stay."

"Oh, my Lord! no explanations—I am quite convinced of the purity of your motives."

"I had resolved, however, on making out my journey to Amalfi on the following morning, knowing that my servants must have arrived there, and that, in a country where banditti are not unfrequent, any farther delay might lead to apprehension for my safety, and consequent search after me. My conclusions were just; but, alas! the reflection had come too late. I had already trod back some miles of the road between Massa and Sorrento, in order to regain the path branching off to Amalfi, when my attention was arrested by a scene of such singular grandeur and interest, that to pass it by and not attempt its delineation was impossible. True it is, however, that Nature always baffles the pencil in proportion as she draws forth our admiration of her; and my study cost me a considerable time to render it in any way worthy of what was before me: perhaps, too, I had been roused into a kind of competition in my work, by the perusal of Silius Italicus, who has left us a description of the identical spot I was pourtraying, in language of such truth and poetry, as at once to lead to its recognition, even though so many ages have intervened, and so many storms and tempests have rolled over it; while at the same time he gives to his picture all the sublimity and magnificence it really possesses.

"I had written down the lines on my paper, from a little volume of his poem, which I ever carried with me as the best classical guide to the scenes of antiquity; and, as if in rivalry of his powers, continued my efforts to render the portrait as true and living as his own,—when my attention was roused by a sudden exclamation from my attendant; and, lifting up my eyes, I beheld a human being differing, certainly, as much from the half-naked and ragged appearance of the inhabitants of the country, as he was *out of keeping* with the scene before us. It was Le Brun, my valet, who in breathless haste approached the spot where I sat, presenting a figure which I shall never forget. My first impulse was to laugh; for the *exquisite* style of his costume had turned to the poor fellow's discomfiture in the exertions of his search for me. My inclination to be amused at the decoration of his person, nevertheless, gave way to another feeling, as he flung himself on his knees before me, and, with a voice and expression of countenance which evinced sincere attachment and solicitude for my safety, thanked the Saints,

and the Blessed Virgin, that I was alive; then starting upon his feet, he loked first at me, and then at himself, and, as if drawing a comparison between our relative appearance, he exclaimed: *Ah! mon Dieu! et Monsieur est si tranquille, s'occupant paisiblement comme si de rien était, pendant que tout le monde refuse d'obéir, et que le pauvre Le Brun a couru çà et là ventre à terre afin de le trouver! Voyez donc le sang-froid de Messieurs les Anglais: jamais je ne le comprendrais. Mais vous voilà, Monsieur, grâces au ciel, sain et sauf, et me voilà quitte pour la peur,*' and looking down with woful grimace at his torn garments, he added, '*et la perte de mes habits.*'

"It was some moments before I could recover sufficiently from my surprise to ask any questions; and when I did, I was constantly interrupted by Le Brun's exclamations at my imprudence, at my disregard of the anxiety which my delay occasioned himself and my servants, and, above all, of the solicitude and illness which the Signora Rosalinda had experienced on account of my sudden departure. In the end, I obtained something like a clear statement of what had occurred. Le Brun, it appeared, had reached Amalfi on the same evening that he quitted Sorrento, and had remained there, patiently awaiting my coming, two entire days; when, as I failed to make my appearance, as he received no intelligence of me, and as reports of the danger of the route which I had to traverse reached him from all quarters, he determined on returning to Sorrento by sea, and following the road by which I had left it, in the endeavour to find me, or satisfy his apprehensions respecting my fate.

"With this object he had embarked, leaving one of my people, in the event of my arrival, to inform me of his movements; and calculating that he should make the journey in return, by land, in the space of two days. On reaching Sorrento, his inquiries were naturally directed to the dwelling of Rosalinda: there he obtained no intelligence that could at all tend to diminish his anxiety; but, on the contrary, the alarm she expressed for my safety, added only to the dismay which my sudden and secret departure had occasioned, and contributed more than ever to confirm him in his opinion of the disastrous issue of my journey. Rosalinda, he told me, had never quitted her apartment since my return had ceased to be a matter of hope; and, overcome with sorrow, had refused consolation from the hands of even her most intimate associates. On being made acquainted with my servant's arrival, she had given her domestics instant directions to proceed in search of me: she had informed the

government of Naples of my sudden disappearance; and while parties were sent out to scour the country between Sorrento and Amalfi, Le Brun himself, and a gentleman in whom Rosalinda placed the utmost confidence, left the place, with other friends, accompanied by guides and servants, who were to track every by-path and unfrequented route, in order to gain intelligence of my fate."

"No wonder, indeed, my Lord, you were run down," said Mr. Altamont, "with such numbers after you. I wish it had been in a better cause: but let me hear the end. You went back, of course, to Sorrento, not to the other place?"

"Le Brun," continued Lord Mowbray, "informed me that, at certain points of the road, he and his party separated in different directions; and, after pushing their search to a certain extent, and to a given time, were to re-assemble on the same spot which they had quitted. They had already divided, to meet again, three times; and, drawing out his watch as he spoke, Le Brun pressed me *earnestly* to lose no time in accompanying him to the rendezvous, that the anxiety of his companions, which continued to increase in proportion as each succeeding effort proved unsuccessful, might not suffer any unnecessary augmentation.

"You will readily allow, my good friend, that this was not a moment when a man's powers of reflection would have the fairest chance. My valet's account of the interest which my fate had excited, amongst those very persons, whom a few days before, from a feeling of caprice and selfishness, I was conscious I had unjustly despised; the idea of Rosalinda's solicitude, and ill-repaid hospitality (even if no stronger motive had influenced me in regard to her); the want of *a reason* for refusing to return and acknowledge my debt of gratitude for their exertions in my behalf;—all conspired to force me to the meeting, which Le Brun urged with his utmost energy and impatience; and hastily tying up my portfolio, I prepared to accompany him. The joy of the poor fellow seemed at this moment to have obliterated in him all recollection of his own pitiable appearance; and, as he scrambled on before me, and went skipping on all-fours from rock to rock, he looked every moment back to me with an air of triumph; and as he gained the last summit, his hat was waved repeatedly, and a loud shout followed from his fellow-labourers who hastened forward to meet us; and I soon stood in the midst of full twenty persons, all gathering round me, suffocating me with their embraces (for, you must understand, such is the common salutation of the country, even amongst the

men"—"I hope not amongst the men *and* women," said Mr. Altamont, continuing the parenthesis)—"hugging—congratulating—inquiring of me—then pausing—and then repeating their demonstrations of joy and their questions, over and over again; and, at length, supposing me half dead with fatigue, and exhausted, they were actually preparing to carry me between them,—when I obtained a hearing, and endeavoured to explain my object in having loitered so many days beyond my intention, and my deep regret at occasioning so much anxiety to Rosalinda and her friends, however flattering that anxiety might be to my feelings.

"As I spoke, one of the party, whom I immediately discovered to be a stranger to me, stepped from the group, and taking my hand with warmth, assured me their labours were fully rewarded by having found me safe, and that Rosalinda needed only my presence to make her forget what she had suffered on my account. I imagined he spoke these last words with a tone and expression of concern, as if he implied I had acted wrong; and I at once recognized in the speaker the person in whose favour Rosalinda had seemed so much prepossessed, and whose expected arrival, and the terms in which she spoke of it, had hastened my determination to fly from her society. But the frankness and captivating manner of my supposed rival were irresistible; and I did no more than justice to his noble and disinterested heart, as you will learn in the sequel, in not suffering a suspicion of his sincerity to cross my mind, while he continued thus earnestly to press my return.

"'I will go,' I said; and, without a word more, I began to retrace my steps to Sorrento by the side of my new acquaintance. I soon found I was in the company of a man very different indeed from the class which had formed the society of Rosalinda during my acquaintance with her. He was well read upon every subject; possessed a delicacy of perception and a depth of capacity rarely united; and with it no display—no vanity. My first impression of his character was confirmed on longer acquaintance. Without being a fanatic or a bigot, he was the most zealous religionist, and, without any effeminacy or weakness, the most refined of mortals. I have known many good, many great characters; but so many rare qualities united I have never seen, except in Alessandro Corrajo. Such was the name of the person whom I then met for the first time, and under such peculiar circumstances. During our walk, notwithstanding the high tone of his conversation, and the character of his demeanour, which had something of reserve and dig-

dazzling its influence on the understanding, can ever charm the heart of man (at least, could ever charm my heart), that I at once acknowledged her claim to command and subdue all judgments to obedience with her own. And if I admitted this power in her intellectual qualities, how much was it likely to be increased when, daily and hourly, I contemplated beauty such as hers! Need I say I became desperately enamoured, and wished (the word is a poor word to express my soul's dearest object) to make her my bride? Others might think it was her fortune I coveted, but Rosalinda was not the woman to misinterpret motives: she might, possibly, be deceived, but she could never suspect deceit till its rude reality was forced upon her. On this point, therefore, I had nothing to fear. She did not, however, accept my love. Motives of generosity, I knew, influenced her in declining an offer which she felt would be ill repaid by a less vivid attachment than that which I professed: but, at the same time, she avowed to me that her heart and her hand were free. I imagined this sentence did not preclude all hope, and I continued to be the favoured *friend*. In several excursions to the different states of Italy, to Milan, Venice, Florence, and to Rome, I was the companion of Rosalinda. To those who have wandered amid the fair scenes of Nature in our country, or studied the efforts of art *alone*, the sufferings of solitude under such circumstances are painfully familiar; to them, the want of interchange of thought presents itself in the loss of many of the advantages, and much of the charm which otherwise would be theirs; and need I explain to you, whose mind is so capable of appreciating the beauties around you, and so susceptible of the feelings which the scenes and productions of this country are calculated to inspire, that our intimacy increased in proportion as we travelled under the fostering influence of sentiments united in the admiration of the same sublime objects? And if a congeniality of temper and tastes, in the case of individuals attached by no other interests but those of a common pursuit, can enhance enjoyment, and draw nearer the ties of intercourse—how immeasurably superior, how inexpressibly greater must the felicity prove, how dearer and stronger still the bond which unites, when the companion who shares such happiness is the being in whom our existence and soul is centered! But I enjoyed transports like these only to suffer the more bitterly. My fate is now sealed; *you* have at once, and without effort, perhaps without any wish to do,' (and he looked doubtingly in my face as he spoke) 'gained Rosalinda's affections: be it as it may—*you are beloved!*'"

"I did not think," cried Mr. Altamont, pulling his chair closer to Lord Mowbray's, "that any one, save an Englishman, much less an Italian, could utter so sane a speech. Are you sure, my Lord, you have not composed it for him?"

Lord Mowbray smiled: "I am aware," said he, "that you doubt the faithfulness of my report; but I am not much given to invention; least of all should I invent virtues for a rival."

"So much the worse. I could wish," said Mr. Altamont, "your whole story was but an invention—it grows too serious."

"But you must not interrupt me," continued Lord Mowbray, "or I shall never reach the end of my history. I can account to you, in some measure, for the noble disinterestedness of my friend's reflections, by briefly telling you that he was of Piedmontese origin, and had been brought up under the influence of opinions bordering on those of the Waldenses, with which of course you are acquainted."

Checked, however, in the flow of his sentiments, Lord Mowbray had again recourse to passing his fingers through his hair before he could proceed. At length, after drawing a heavy respiration, he resumed his narrative: "Spite of this avowal, Corrajo lived on with Rosalinda and myself. The more I know of them both, the more I delighted in their society. It was impossible not to love and honour Alessandro Corrajo:—Rosalinda did both. I feel convinced she did; but there was a worthless being of the party, whom if she honoured less, she loved more. One morning I found her in tears. Corrajo was gone. An open letter, which Rosalinda held out to me, explained the cause of his departure. It ran thus:—

"'My dear friends,—It is because you are very dear to me, that I leave you. Let me but know that you mutually make each other's happiness, and honourably make it (for without honour no happiness exists long), and I shall rejoice. I will seek mine elsewhere. Though it is easy to write these words, yet who can understand the anguish they cause to the writer, unless it *be one*, who, in a similar situation, and from similar motives, adopts the same course that I have chosen. In after times, when you are established in England, I will, if you permit me, come to you; Till then, farewell! 'ALESSANDRO CORRAJO.'

"Rosalinda's eyes were fixed intently upon me, while I read this note: I felt they were, though I did not dare look up. A revulsion of thought and sensation came over me, and I was speechless. '*When you are established in England!*' were words of awful sound, and big with meaning which troubled me, and brought me

back to a conviction of the moral position in which I was placed. I saw myself on a frightful precipice, and I saw another, dearer than myself, standing beside me."

"No! no! stop there, my good Lord," said Altamont, "you mistook, believe me! Not *dearer*, that is a wrong term: had she been even *as* dear, there would have been no precipice in question. For *her*, at least, most fortunately it was otherwise; it is all quite right, though *you* were wrong."

Lord Mowbray gulped down the observation, and proceeded: "Yes! I was placed in a situation, in which a man of honour and tenderness ought to have spoken, and spoken out: but a spell was on me, I did *not* speak, I laid down the letter in silence, and Rosalinda from that day became a prey to the deepest melancholy. She proposed to me, after a time, to return to Naples. We did so. Whatever were her own sorrows, she exerted herself to render my existence happy. Her society was chosen in conformity to my predilections and my tastes. Her every action—her language—her manner, were all modelled on principles and rules which she had heard approved by me; and even down to national prejudices and points of etiquette, she was the slave of my will, and became, for my sake, often the object of ridicule and satire from her countrywomen, than whom no nation are more tenacious of their privileges, or more ready to attack the pusillanimity which they consider guilty of a surrender of them. Our whole life was passed in a constant succession of entertainments. I felt happy in the relief they afforded me from the *mal aise* which I endured, I hardly knew why; and was flattered by the unwearied anxiety of her who thus sought to promote my enjoyment. Yet, though the sweet habit of seeking Rosalinda's society constantly led me to her residence, I no longer experienced the same delight in her presence; and if I inquired of myself why this was so, there was no outward cause or ground, which I could assign for the change. Her life, her habits, her feelings, were all sacrificed to mine: but I was still restless, I was still dissatisfied. The source of unhappiness lay within my own bosom. I felt conscious that I was acting ungenerously by one to whom I owed a very different conduct, yet had not the courage either to confess or atone for my fault, or folly, whichever name you will give it.

"The spell, however, which held me in this state of painful hesitation, wavering between what I felt due to a being, led by my own thoughtless conduct to place her happiness in my keeping, and my reluctance to adopt the cruel alternative of ridding myself of the

embarrassment by an open avowal of my feelings, was at length broken by one of those fortuitous circumstances, the insignificance even of which cannot prevent their being attributed to providential interference, since we often see the simplest means employed by Omnipotence to effect the most complicated ends."

Mr. Altamont nodded his head, saying, "Right, my good Lord; I taught you that, and am happy you remember your lesson so well by rote; hem! hem! I wish I could say by *heart*." Lord Mowbray gave one of his melancholy smiles, and proceeded. "Amongst the English travellers resident at Naples, there was a certain Mr. Beverley, a man of noble family, but whose intimacy I had never cultivated; partly from a want of sympathy in our general tastes and pursuits, and partly from the same cause which had kept me at a distance from my own countrymen:—I mean, my wish to understand and know thoroughly the people amongst whom I resided, and an acquaintance with whose manners and habits was a principal object in my travels. We were, however, on speaking terms; and visits had occasionally passed between Mr. Beverley and myself. He called one morning at my door, and was received. After discussing the current topics of the day,—the opera—the last favourite singer—the last great loss at play—and the scandal of Naples in general, he prefaced his allusion to the subject of his communication, by many apologies for the liberty he was taking, the want of sufficient intimacy to authorise what he was doing, etc., etc.; and then again excused himself on the score of regard for a fellow-countryman so distinguished as myself, whose national character and reputation, at such a distance from home, was as dear and valuable to him as his own, till I was perfectly lost in surmise as to the probable explanation of his mysterious address.

"At length, he drew forth a letter; and, at the same time repeating his apologies, he began reading the paragraph on which he stated his interference was grounded. It referred to Rosalinda and myself, and contained, as is generally the case in such instances, some shade of truth in the leading outline of *fact*, while the details were made up of falsehood and gratuitous assumption. The conclusions at which the notable compiler of this precious scandal arrived, were briefly summed up in the last sentence:—'Thus the heir of the distinguished title of Mowbray is on the point of being sacrificed to the arts of a designing and intriguing foreigner; one whose former life and habits, if fully disclosed, would present, in their repulsive and hateful nature, an antidote to the charms of the syren, let her victim

be as weak or as madly devoted as possible. Hitherto she has had the skill to evade, or the success to escape detection; or if such of her paramours as have fled from her blandishments in time, and saved themselves from the toils spread for them, have known her true character, they have sought to conceal their own follies and delusion by their silence. Rosalinda stands condemned, on moral evidence, as the most vicious and depraved of her sex. How much is it to be lamented that our noble countryman should fall a sacrifice to this ignorance of his situation! Is there no means that can be used to awaken him to his danger, and rouse him, before it is too late for exertion, to throw off these dishonourable chains? Were I on the spot,' continued the writer of this notable epistle, 'though unknown to him, I feel convinced I could not resist the powerful impulse which dictates this wish to save him from impending disgrace and misery. I should go to him and declare at once all the circumstances of the case; and though the task, I fear, would be an ungrateful one, yet the sense of having discharged a great duty would be my reward. The Dormers (you know them?) are here. Poor Ophelia, to whom the subject of this letter paid formerly very marked attention, and succeeded in making a deep impression on her heart, is the picture of misery, and undergoes constant martyrdom in hearing the conduct of her former admirer discussed in the manner it is in all societies. To those who are acquainted with this amiable girl and her attachment to the person I allude to, the contrast of choice on his part is a matter of astonishment, and induces the strongest feelings of regret at the probable issue of his conduct.'

"Mr. Beverley paused as he concluded this contemptible and shallow effort on the part of his correspondent, to conceal the real motive of the calumnies and falsehoods in which he had indulged at mine and Rosalinda's expense; at least unjustly at *hers*, as far as I was concerned; for never was victim held in chains less galling, or more in his own power to cast off, than myself; and as for knowledge of her character, I did not conceive I was so blinded by passion as not to be aware of the real feeling and disposition of one with whom I had been for months in daily intercourse. As I said, Mr. Beverley paused, and appeared somewhat agitated when he arrived at the end of his task. I confess I had listened to him with much impatience, but made up my mind to hear all I could before I spoke.

"I then looked him very steadily in the face, and said, 'It is better, Sir, that I remain ignorant of the name of your correspondent (neither can I suppose, that he himself wishes otherwise); for,

dishonourable as he has proved himself, by giving utterance to the slander which I have just heard, and which is as false as its author is contemptible and wicked, I fear I should not easily refrain from chastising him as he merits, did I, in the first impulse of my indignation, know who he was; but I myself should be the first to regret having yielded to my feelings on an occasion so little worthy of exciting them; and should consider I had stepped from my situation as a gentleman, and acted a very ill-judged part towards the lady who is the object of this attack, if I condescended to reply in any shape to the charges and insinuations of her accuser. You perceive' (for I observed he began to tremble for himself) 'that I at once admit your character, Mr. Beverley, of being merely the channel of communication; though I am afraid, in acquitting you of participation in the mischief intended, I must do so at the expense of your understanding. You are very young, and perhaps did not consider, that, in becoming the tool of an artful person on this occasion, you were exposing yourself to a suspicion of being the author of the calumnies propagated; at least you would be so judged by the world, till you proved the contrary to be the fact. I have done, however: I repeat it would be giving too much consequence to the tissue of falsehoods you have just read to me, to notice them farther; and if you acquaint your employer with the fate of your mission, I only beg that you do so with a proper regard to truth, as to how it was received, and with an assurance to him, that if any circumstance could add to the contempt I feel for his conduct, it is the unmanly way in which he has endeavoured to lead you blindly into this affair, while he had not courage openly to proceed in it in his own person.'

"Mr. Beverley bowed, and retired, without any attempt at farther apology or explanation; and, in this part of his embassy, certainly acquitted himself with more sense than when he consented to undertake it. He left Naples immediately, I believe, for I saw no more of him; nor, indeed, have I ever met him since. Well, Altamont, I must hurry to the close of this sad story—it does not tell well for me."

"No," said Mr. Altamont; "I cannot flatter you so far as to say it does."

"I will not excuse myself; but proceed:—As my feelings of indignation at the manner as well as matter of this communication subsided, I began to view my relative situation with Rosalinda in somewhat a different light. It was true I had discovered that I was *no longer happy* in her society; but I argued that my not being so

proceeded from a sense of injustice towards *her*. I had never reflected that I might also be unjust to myself and others, who had claims upon my duty and affection, by thus clinging to an attachment which even with all my preference for the object of it, I had never looked to in any definite or conclusive point of view. This reflection occurred to me now for the first time. I asked myself the question—in what light do I appear to others, in regard to my actions? The answer was obvious to me. But I have a right to love whom I please, to marry whom I please;—but to marry Rosalinda—it was a step I had never yet contemplated; and one which, without resolving *not* to take, I had never as yet inquired if I was prepared to hazard. These reflections, having reduced a subject which pressed heavily upon me into a narrow compass, were likely soon to bring in their train some decisive conclusion. I felt it impossible that matters *could* go on as they had done; and although I had habit, inclination, and indolence to contend with, and, yielding to their influence, still continued for a time to linger in Rosalinda's society; yet every day the conviction grew stronger upon me of the necessity of coming to the resolution either of making her my wife, or abandoning her for ever. I confess, much as I despised, and, indeed, disbelieved at first, the mass of calumny heaped upon her by Mr. Beverley's correspondent, yet its poison was not entirely without effect. I ruminated on the mixture of truth and falsehood that ran through what I had heard, till I separated, as I imagined, what was worthy of credit, and what the reverse; and as admission of the possibility, first of one fact, and then of another, found place in my mind, my distrust of the accuser gradually abated. The bias my mind had taken, was sufficiently apparent. I will not attempt to excuse the want of principle betrayed in this change of feelings and opinion. *I called it reason* at the time; and acted upon it as if it had been such. I called it justice; and felt satisfied my decisions were founded on the strictest laws of right. I became, in short, suspicious of Rosalinda. I scrutinized her mode and manner of existence. I considered her conduct equivocal; her character as any thing but free from taint. Could I then make a being of *such* a stamp my wife? It was impossible. What happiness could be expected from such an union, where want of confidence obtruded itself on the first outset, and in the contemplation only of such an event. It was in vain I felt, that in the first stage of my acquaintance with Rosalinda, it became me thus to inquire if the object I was pursuing were worthy of my regard, were such as I could de-

sire to be united to in the indissoluble ties of marriage, and in the calmer moments of reason and reflection, hope to look up to with sentiments of esteem and respect. It was in vain that the remembrance recurred to me, that what I now did was done *too late*, —unless character, honour, even common humanity, were to be set at nought, and sacrificed to my selfishness and want of decision. As if anxious, however, to find an excuse for the line of conduct I had been preparing to adopt, I daily dwelt on all the little circumstances of Rosalinda's life, since our first acquaintance; and, in every one, thought I found some ground for the suspicious that hourly haunted me. My resolution at last was taken: I quitted Naples. I addressed a few lines to her, whose charms had so long spread around me the delusive dream of existence, from which I now awoke; but I made no attempt at explanation; I gave no reason for my abrupt departure, for I dared not trust to the vindication which I felt Rosalinda, spite of my suspicions, had the means of offering, in regard to herself and all her actions. My only safety was in sudden flight. My letter was cold and unanswerable. Rosalinda never replied to it. Would to God my conscience had been equally silent! but I have felt it here and here" (striking his head and heart) "ever since."

"You were wrong, certainly," said Mr. Altamont; "but it is best always to retreat from error, and not, because one has been halfway on the road to ruin, continue on to the journey's end. Poor Rosalinda! was she totally silent? was she quite passive under the blow?"

"Not a word—not a reproach escaped her. Her silence has been her only rebuke, and it has sunk deep——"

"Ah!" replied Mr. Altamont, "this is curious; but she has pursued you here, it seems, though the character in which she comes is strange enough. She is engaged as Prima Donna at the Opera, I believe?"

"I know not," replied Lord Mowbray, "how all this is, or what it means; I have seen her once only while staying at Montgomery Hall, at some house in the neighbourhood; but I fled her presence; and from that very cause I am here at this moment. I came hither to reflect upon what I should do."

"Oh! not marry her surely, I hope, after having had courage to resist all allurements to do so in the very atmosphere of the original syrens themselves. Be assured, my dear Lord, it would never have done—it will never do. Had she not appeared on the stage,

it were different, perhaps; but since she has *chosen* such a resource (it must be choice), that settles the matter."

Lord Mowbray sighed. "Well, Altamont, I can talk no more to-night: I never talked so much before, and never shall again, I believe. Good-night!" and they separated, to reflect upon, and to feel, the unhappy results and true sense of Flirtation.

CHAPTER XV.

O hone a rie! O hone a rie!
The pride of Albin's line is o'er,
And fallen Glenartney's stateliest tree—
We ne'er shall see Lord Ronald more!
WALTER SCOTT.

When our main subject was interrupted by following Lord Mowbray to the retirement he had chosen near London, where the history of his early life has been developed in his account given of it to Mr. Altamont, the family at Montgomery Hall were left in a state of great anxiety and agitation, occasioned by the visit of the mysterious stranger in the mask. Whatever efforts had been made by General Montgomery to conceal the real state of his mind, evidence of what was passing within too plainly showed itself in the absence of that serenity of countenance which was his peculiar characteristic. A look of care withered his placid brow; and the smile that was wont to play around his mouth was exchanged for a fallen expression of woe, which marked, more than the lapse of time had ever done, the deep furrows of advancing years.

There was also a change in Lady Emily. Her quick, light step became measured, and as it were thoughtful, in its path; the song that she carolled gaily through the house, in passing from one part of it to another, was no longer heard; and she would sit, listless and unoccupied, gazing on vacancy.

One evening, while Miss Macalpine was studying her favourite Madame De Sevigné, and Lady Emily was listlessly touching some chords of her harp, Miss Macalpine said, after a long pause, during which she had been contemplating the changed expression of Lady Emily's countenance—"I ha'e been thinking, Lady Emily, it's mony a lang day now since Lord Mowbray hied awa' in that *burky* manner;—I wonder whaur he is now?"

"What made you think of him, Alpinia?"

"No' a bit, but I miss him; I think he had a pleasaunt way wi' him, and the General began to tak' to him; for ance he forms a habit, he gets a liking for the company of ony ane, and can ill spare them: there's that feckless bodie, Sir Richard Townley, just because he chaunced to come, and remained; though he's but a kind, quiet, silly bodie, he gets leave to roost here ablins for life."

"Poor Sir Richard! he is a lonely creature; he has no one in the world to care for, or to love him; and that is such a melancholy case, that were he twenty times more vapid than he is, I should feel inclined to soothe and cherish him."

"Ay, lassie, you ha'e mony o' your uncle's ways o' thinking and feeling; the mair the better."

"Besides," continued Lady Emily, "he has become so useful to my dear uncle in his minor cares, and is so anxious to please him, that it is quite reason enough for me to hope that he will live and die with us; but as to Lord Mowbray," (and she hesitated, and coloured) "he, you know, is but a new acquaintance, and my uncle does not seem to miss him."

"That's like eneugh; but yoursel', Lady Emily, dinna ye find the time langsome; and are na ye unco dowie like, since the young Lord's awa'?"

"I thought him very agreeable, and liked him—rather liked him; but yet; I hardly know *why*. No! Alpinia, I know what you mean; but it is not *that* which makes me melancholy; it is the change which all of us have observed in my dear uncle. Since the visit of that mysterious stranger, there seems to be a noxious influence shed over his mind, which communicates itself to every thing around. He hardly now bears to hear us sing, and never joins me; all is changed from what it was, and in how short a time—it is scarcely a week, and we *were* so happy! and then, the melancholy fate of Rose—that is another source of grief to me. I am depressed, dear Alpinia, by these circumstances, and it is in vain I struggle to prevent their influence over me."

At this moment, Lady Frances entered the room. "So, Mr. Carlton is arrived, I am happy to say, and I trust his presence will relieve the dull monotony of our silent hours."

"Is he come back?" cried Lady Emily, starting up; "then, no doubt, he will have brought some tidings of Rose: where is he?"

"He is with my uncle, in the breakfast-room."

"*Don't you think* I might go, and knock at the door, and just ask

my uncle?" And without waiting for an answer, she ran past her sister, and, hastening down the great staircase, she met Mr. Carlton.

Forgetful, or rather unconscious of the interpretation that might be given to her manner, she addressed him with the unrestrained eagerness of feeling which her anxiety for the intelligence he was supposed to bring naturally prompted. "Oh! Mr. Carlton, how happy I am to see you!" and she held out her hand. "What news have you brought us? have you been able to learn any tidings of Rose?"

Her breathless agitation, her kindly extended hand, all seemed to Mr. Carlton's presumptuous interpretation to be indicative of an uncontrollable passion for himself which she had hitherto disguised, but which could not be longer concealed. He caught her hand, pressed it rapturously to his lips, and declared he had never known a moment's pleasure since he last beheld her! This mode of receiving her greeting, quickly brought her to a sense of her own imprudence. "It is of Rose," she said, drawing back, "that I come to inquire; and it is your obliging readiness, in having acceded to my uncle's wishes, by going to inquire for that unhappy girl, which makes me feel so grateful to you!"

"And yet," he said, with a look and smile of the utmost self-complaceny—"and yet, suppose I should not be content with gratitude!" and again he attempted to take her hand.

"Sir—Mr. Carlton, I do not understand you. I must go—I must go to my uncle!"

"Not till you promise to hear me!" he said: and he led her into a room, the door of which opened on the staircase. "Dear Lady Emily, forgive me!" he continued; "but indeed I were deserving of losing this opportunity for ever, if I suffered it to pass by, without taking advantage of it, to declare, what you must have observed, that I am deeply attached to you, and desirous of making such proposals as I think your uncle, the General, cannot disapprove."

Emily, utterly confused, or rather confounded, did not immediately reply; and Mr. Carlton, with increased confidence, went on. "Do but confirm, with your gracious lips, what your eyes, your manner, your blushes, have so sweetly betrayed to me, and I will fly to your uncle to make known my happiness, and to procure his sanction to our union."

Lady Emily's unfeigned surprise during this declaration, which had hitherto made her silent, brought her to a sense of composure: and with *that innocent dignity*, which awed even the presumptuous

Carlton, she replied, "Indeed, Mr. Carlton, you so astonish me, that I have not had sufficient presence of mind to explain away the mistake under which you labour."

"Mistake!" said Mr. Carlton, starting back; "surely no mistake! your manner!"

"If my manner, in the late brief moment of my accosting you, assumed a colouring, which it most assuredly never had before, I must beg leave to say, that my great interest in poor Rose alone could have occasioned it; and as it is impossible that I should affect to misunderstand the flattering meaning of your words in respect to myself, I must beg to undeceive you, and to express, in the most explicit and decided manner, that I never did, and never shall, entertain any other sentiment towards you, than that which, I hope, I feel towards every one—the kindness and respect I owe to all my uncle's friends."

Mr. Carlton stood abashed—confounded—enraged; but with a ready effrontery he rallied his scattered senses, and began to affect to laugh, saying, "My dear Lady Emily, pray do not alarm yourself; I have now proved, what I always have heard was true, that ladies are as credulous, when the power of their charms is in question, as they are apt to be hasty. I have certainly misunderstood your meaning; but you must blame yourself.—Ha, ha, ha!—I cannot help laughing; my dear Lady Emily, you have a great deal to learn—ha, ha!—you are indeed quite new to the world!"

Lady Emily, somewhat abashed, and considerably indignant at the insolence of this impertinent coxcomb, could not for a minute or two regain her composure; but, recollecting herself, she replied with great dignity: "At all events, Sir, I have just been taught one useful lesson, which is, to be made aware how far self-conceit may lead one into error, and how much farther impudence may attempt its concealment." Having thus spoken, she awaited not for any farther conversation, but hastily withdrew.

She was no sooner alone, than she reproached herself for having allowed an impetuosity of manner to subject her to the insolence of such a man; and she determined to check that tendency to yield to impulses, even when innocent, which she felt aware must ever lay her open to misinterpretation, perhaps to insolence and injustice. She longed to repose these feelings in the breast of some one who was capable of feeling them with her—some one who would soothe and restore her to self-approbation. Lady Frances was her sister, only *by the ties of consang*uinity; no sympathy whatever existed in their

haracters or their tastes ; was a circumstance which often de-ressed the spirits of Emily ; but there was an elasticity of joyousness her disposition, which soon recovered its spring after any depres-on, and buoyed her up again to taste her blessings, and endure her ials patiently. Some persons might mistake this heavenly gift for vity; but it was only those who look not below the surface of ings, and who are themselves strangers to the placid beam which umines such as are firm in religious trust.

Though Lady Emily's spirit soared above sublunary things, her eart was alive, achingly alive, to every tender feeling, whether ose feelings were called into action for herself or for others. She waited, therefore, anxiously to know what tidings Mr. Carlton had rought of Rose, and lamented that any circumstance irrelevant to at subject should have occasioned delay in coming at that, to her, ost interesting fact. She flew, therefore, to the General, as soon as he had composed herself after her late unpleasant interview, and sked him what news he had heard of the wretched object of her olicitude. "Have you not seen Mr. Carlton yourself?" interrupted he General. "Edwards told me you were with him in the blue room."

"Yes, I was; but—I could not learn from him any thing whatever respecting Rose."

"No! that was strange, my Emily. What then did you converse about?"

After a moment's hesitation, Lady Emily related the substance of their interview exactly as it had occurred. The General rose from his chair, and walked to and fro with a disturbed air. "Are you sure, my love," said he, "that you make no mistake? Perhaps some little perturbation on your part may have led you to misunderstand the gentleman."

"No, no, my dear uncle, what passed was too recent for me to forget; and I am very certain that I have repeated to you our conversation as it took place."

"Coxcomb!" exclaimed General Montgomery, "he shall never more set foot within these doors; that is to say—" and again the General strode across the room. "Emily, my dearest and best, I may as well tell you now, as at any other time—*This* is no longer a home for us."

"What mean you, my dearest uncle? what matters the impertinence of Mr. Carlton? we need not see him again?"

"Very true, my sweet Emily," replied General Montgomery thoughtfully; "but that is not the question; we are destined to be

wanderers on the face of the earth:" and he leant his forehead on his hand. Lady Emily stood dismayed and silent.

"Speak not of this matter, my dear one," continued he; "I have confided a secret to you, let it be one for the present; I know I may trust you; and now leave me; send Pennington to me; remember, dearest, be silent."

Lady Emily's emotion was visible when she joined Miss Macalpine in the library. "Weel, Lady Emily, and what's the news? there's matter in't, indeed, when the General winna see Mr. Carlton; but you 've had a gude lang crack wi' him yoursel'. I'm thinking ye ken mair nor ye'll tell. What na business could Mr. Carlton ha'e wi' ye but ane? Are ye gawing to tak' him? Dinna be sae close to an auld friend."

"I marry Mr. Carlton! never, Alpinia."

"How is this?" said Lady Frances, entering at the same moment with no very pleased expression of countenance; "what are all these violent professions about?"

Lady Emily repeated the words, which she was aware her sister had overheard. "What! before you have been asked? You are already enjoying the thought of refusing a proposal of marriage; at least wait till the choice is in your power."

"And what then, Frances?"

"My word for it," she replied with bitterness, "with all your romance you will not refuse the handsome Mr. Carlton, presumptive heir to an earldom, and all the advantages of splendour he can offer you to boot. No, Emily, you are not quite mad enough for that."

"Yes I am, though; but I do not call it madness."

"Psha! you are wise enough to know, that there are certain points beyond which *il n'est pas permis d'être bête.*"

"*Bête* or not, I must ever think and feel as I do; I will not marry Mr. Carlton."

"Oh! wait till you are asked."

"Why! do ye doubt the lassie's been asked?" said Miss Macalpine.

"No!" said Lady Frances, the colour flushing her face, "I am *sure* she has not."

"My dear Frances, I am very new, as Mr. Carlton said, but as far as I could understand—"

"Oh, does it rest there! some mistake, some nonsense" (affecting to laugh); "but don't tell me, that *if* Mr. Carlton would be per-

ıded to throw himself at your feet, you would refuse him. Psha! ıse to be a countess in reversion with twenty thousand a-year!"

"We do not understand each other," replied Lady Emily, with ıigh.

The conversation of the sisters was very apt to terminate in a ınner equally unsatisfactory; and, as Lady Emily observed, they d not understand each other.

The day passed off heavily enough to all parties. Mr. Carlton had ıturned to his own house considerably mortified at his reception; ıe General had his sorrows, Lady Emily her sad surmises, more ıd that they were indefinite; Miss Macalpine was burning with unratified curiosity, and Lady Frances with ill-suppressed disappointıent and envy. Towards evening, after dinner, the arrival of the ost was hailed with unusual interest. The post-town was some ıiles from Montgomery Hall, and there was a private bag in which he letters to and from the family were deposited. The bag was deıivered to the porter, the porter gave it to the steward, and the teward to the groom of the chambers, who placed it with all due ›rm upon a large silver tray, and presented it to his master; then ame forth the key of keys from the General's own pocket, which opened this important budget of hopes and fears, griefs and joys. During this ceremonial, Lady Emily had frequently found it more difficult to restrain her impatience than to perform any other exercise of virtue which had hitherto fallen to her share to practise; but there are some foibles in the very greatest characters, something to bear with and to be forborne by all those whom we most love and esteem, or by whom we are most loved and esteemed ourselves; these are the minutiæ of life, which nevertheless compose its sum total; and upon our treatment of these, depends more of our happiness than is gratifying to self-love to acknowledge.

On the present trial of patience, Lady Emily had jumped off her chair; but the General's love of order was not to be broken in upon, even in favour of his niece's infirmity, and she had to sit down again and witness the accustomed process of letter delivery with what philosophy she could summon to her aid. "Let us see," said the General, feeling for his spectacles;—"Emily, love, fetch me my spectacles; they lie in the second volume of Evelyn."

Another pause, but not a long one; for the light messenger returned in a moment, and then, at last, the contents of the bag were distributed. "Alpinia, there is for you; and Frances, my queen, there is for you—these are newspapers," laying them aside; "but

here is one for me: I think I know the hand:" and turning it round and round, he opened, and having perused it, gave it to his niece. Lady Emily coloured as she saw the signature; but recollecting that it probably contained the intelligence she was so anxious about, she hastily ran her eyes over the page, and read as follows:

" 'My dear General,—I grieve to say that the person about whom you have interested yourself so kindly, is not worthy of your goodness towards her. She is become the mistress of a low fellow who keeps a tavern, and is apparently quite satisfied with the part she has chosen. As you could not receive me this morning, I have sent my servant over to B— with this note, to be put into your letter-bag. I shall call again in a day or two at the Hall, and give you details concerning this unlucky affair, &c. &c.' "

No sooner had Lady Emily perused this note, than she burst into a passion of tears, overcome with the sad tidings of Rose's disgrace, and she wept bitterly. "Ah! my dear child," said the General, "you must not indulge in this sensibility; indeed you must not. Life, and its practical duties, will require of you to be more chary of your tenderness."

But what availed the General's experience and gentle caution? It is not till the heart has been torn to pieces, that we learn the art of wrapping it in a leaden shroud, ere it has ceased to beat altogether. The tears of Lady Emily flowed abundantly; and, unrepressed by any selfish reserve, she felt as though her own purity had been blighted in Rose's fall. The first time we are convinced of the fallacy of trusting to mortal virtue, is the first time we are humbled to a due conviction of the imperfection of our own nature. The effect produced on Lady Emily by this melancholy story, was much greater even than the cause seemed to justify; but it was an epoch in her moral existence, and tended to the formation of no common character. Unable to recover any composure, she retired for the night. "Go with her," said the General, in a faltering voice—"go with her, Alpinia, and soothe her."

Nobody ever asked Lady Frances to soothe any one; it seemed to be quite out of the question that she should either suffer herself, or console others in their sufferings. It appeared as though she were a sort of person exempt from the common lot of human infirmities. On the present occasion, she contented herself with remarking, "It was a pity her sister should indulge in these agitations: she would be an old woman," she said, "before she was a young *one.*"

"You are right, Frances," said the General; "but Emily cannot avoid being what she is. I wish I could divide disposition more equally between you."

"Pray, my dear Sir," in an affected tone of languid tranquillity, "do not talk of such a thing; you quite frighten me to think of such a possibility."

"There's no fears," said Miss Macalpine dryly; "but, General, when I return from Lady Emily's chamber, I want a word with you, if you please; I have just received a letter which astonishes me, and I would like just to know what you thought upon it."

"Certainly, whenever you wish; only go now to Emily, and assure the dear child that whatever can be done for the Delvins, shall be done. Well, Frances, and whom is your packet from? It seems to have afforded you pleasure."

"My letter is from Lady Arabella, and it does really afford me much delight in prospect: for it proposes my visiting them in Gloucestershire for the winter; and then, that they should take me on from thence to London."

"And would you, Frances, like to accept this invitation, or not?" asked the General, with one of his cunning looks.

"Oh! I should like excessively to go, my dear uncle, if you have no objection; there are few things that will afford me greater satisfaction."

"You jest," rejoined the General: "this is only to deceive me. I know better; by all means send an apology."

Lady Frances saw that *he was* only in jest, and, therefore, she bore the trial patiently; nevertheless, she did not let the subject rest till she had declared her own sentiments in unequivocal terms, and obtained her uncle's consent to her wishes. Lady Frances returned her thanks after her best manner (a manner, that when put on, few could resist, not even those who knew it was *merely* manner), and left her uncle to the perusal of a packet of letters, which he had not yet opened.

The next day, General Montgomery proposed to Lady Emily to accompany her sister. "It could be easily managed," he said, "I a m sure; for I know you were ever a favourite of the Duke's."

"Oh no! not at present, if you please, dearest uncle. I have so many things to think of and to arrange here, that I should not like to leave my home just now." Lady Emily did *not* say "I see you are unhappy, uncle, and I will not leave you while I have power to cheer or soothe you;" but she was not misunderstood.

The General sighed, pressed her hand, and left her; while she went to her sister and most warmly offered her her services, in making any little preparations for her journey; which obtained for her a kinder acknowledgment of thanks than she was wont to receive, and Lady Frances added to these a hope that she would not be long immured in her present dull situation; "for," said she, "my uncle is become so gloomy, it is quite impossible to exist here any longer. Could you not contrive, shortly, to go with Mrs. Fitzhammond to Sherbourne Park?"

"What, Frances, when you are absent, to leave my uncle alone?"

"It is all very well, Emily, to sacrifice oneself now and then to a dull life in favour of old relations, but all the year round is really too great an effort; besides, has he not Colonel Pennington, and Miss Macalpine, and Sir Richard Townley, that prince of thistle hunters?"

"All these persons, I acknowledge, are of use to him in their different ways; and Colonel Pennington he truly loves—but *I*, you know, am the *favourite*, though you are the queen!"

"You pay dear for your favouritism, as every body does, I believe. Defend me from being a favourite! it is a troublesome distinction."

"Well, Frances, it may be so, but I would not give up being my uncle's favourite, so long as I am able to maintain my post, for any other advantage whatever; and I am repaid for any little sacrifice I make, by observing that my uncle's countenance lights up whenever I come into the room. He would miss me, I am sure, at the card-table; he would have no one to sing with; his violoncello would lie useless; Alpinia would cease to be entertaining, if I did not torment her; in short, I cannot think of leaving him at present; besides, I am so happy as I am, and where I am, why should I think of going elsewhere?"

"Come, Emily, do not play the hypocrite—I know better. You cannot deceive me; the fact is, you imagine Lord Mowbray will return, but you are entirely mistaken, I can assure you. I have got a letter this day, which tells me that Lady Dormer and her three *missy* daughters are just arrived from the Continent, and the Flirtation which began there, between him and Miss Juliana, is, I understand, to wind up in a marriage."

"And if it does, Frances, how does that concern me?" said Lady *Emily, colouring.* "Lord Mowbray never regarded me in any other

light than in that of a good-natured child; but he appeared to admire you, and to pay you more attention than any one else."

"Oh, I will make all his admiration over to you—a generous present—take it and welcome; that man will, I am sure, be a tormenting husband. All husbands, I believe, are tyrants; but at least I will take the best chance of being the tyrant of a tyrant, and I do not feel that that would be at all an easy matter with the lord in question."

"Well, as we are about disposing of Lord Mowbray, according to our own views, he might perhaps, from the very quality you have mentioned, suit me better than he would you; for, provided I loved my husband, I am sure I should have no will but his; and of this proviso I would previously make myself certain, for I never would marry any man I did not love and honour."

"Well," said her sister, smiling, "keep your own secret: but people do not get up at six in the morning to look after daisies and bird-nests for nothing; still less do they ford brooks and frequent fortune-tellers, without some better and more sensible object than putting their feet into cold water to get a pleurisy, and talking to dirty people in a dirty lane, under a hedge. No, no! you had a mind to show your pretty feet and ankles, and therefore you forded the brook. You wanted to know how soon you would find an admirer, and you sought the fortune-tellers. You thought that an early walk, before any body but the housemaid were up, sounded interesting; and so you set forth. It is all very natural in its way, only do not over-do it,"—nodding with a look of sagacity.

"Indeed, my dear Frances, you are mistaken; I am sure admiration must be very delightful, but no one ever thought of admiring me; and I do very seriously declare, that the old story of my fording the brook happened simply as I related it to you."

"Well, if I do believe you, I can only say there are some ninnies in the world, and that I am sorry my sister is one of them."

Lady Emily laughed her own natural laugh, and hoped that her sister would find that happiness in her wisdom which she enjoyed in her folly. "But somehow, Frances," said she, "I am afraid you will not."

"Afraid, indeed!" reddening with real anger:—"pray, why?"

"Why, because I never yet have seen you what I call happy."

"Because I have no particular *penchant* for romance or flowers—or walking out to see the sun rise!—or have not a broad laugh ready on *every occasion*, eh? But it is quite in vain to talk to you.

We shall see what a reform will take place when you go to town; that is to say, if you have any sense. In the mean time I leave you to enjoy your ruralities, your roses, and streams; now and then a ghost, perchance, may enliven you."

"Oh, sister! dear sister!" cried Lady Emily, cowering near Lady Frances, "do not make a joke of that. You know what we saw. You know that I am the veriest coward alive; and, as to what regards powers beyond mortal ken, I would leave them untouched upon by mortal presumption."

"You are really too silly, or too hypocritical. Good-night. Time and London may mend you—I cannot. Good-night!"

The next day Lady Frances took her leave courteously of the inhabitants of the Hall. She did not even attempt to appear sorry upon the occasion; but a hearty burst of tears fell from Emily's eyes as she strained her sister to her bosom; to which the latter replied by settling her *pelerine*, which had been disarranged; and, declaring that she hated scenes and scene-making, gracefully departed. This heartlessness helped to dry Emily's tears the quicker; and she put on all her smiles and artless arts to comfort her uncle for Lady Frances's departure.

The loss of an accustomed face, which is endeared by habit, if by no tenderer tie, makes a sad blank in a domestic circle; and although Frances was not Emily, she was still very dear to her uncle, and her beauty recreated his eyes. How much the very aspect of the young enlivens the aged! "She is gone, poor thing!" said General Montgomery, looking at the place which she was accustomed to occupy at the dinner-table; "she is gone to that gay world, which she thinks of but as a show-box, and herself as the fairest show in it. She knows not what deadly snares lurk there. She knows not how false and hollow are all its pursuits when it is from them alone that happiness is expected:—this must be proved by experience; preaching will never convey the lesson. But you, you, my Emily, that cozening world will not, surely, prove so false to you; because you look at it *through another medium:* it will, therefore, in all probability, disappoint you less. But are you certain, dearest and best, that you do not repent of your choice in remaining here with me, instead of accompanying your sister, as you might have done?"

"No, indeed, dear uncle, I have no wish but to remain with you. Where you stay, I like to stay; where you go, I like to go. I love *gaiety and diversion*; but I have so many pleasures at home, that

the day is never long enough for enjoying them all. So why should I go elsewhere in quest of more?"

"I used to think this really was your case, my best Emily; but of late your joyousness has been subdued. I trust, however, it is only poor Rose's fate that has affected you."

"Ah! poor Rose!" and the big tear rushed to her eye and dimmed its sparkling; but she brushed it off hastily, "I have, indeed, no other cause for sorrow."

The General pressed her hand, and they were sure, at least, that they were happy in each other's affection. "I want a word wi' ye, General, at your leisure, if you please," said Miss Macalpine, looking in at the half-opened door.

"As many as you please, my good lady. Is it a secret? or will you disclose your business now?"

"It's no' just a secret; but an' if it's the same to you, I would rather say what I've gotten to say to yoursel first and Lady Emily presently."

Accordingly so soon as the rest of the guests were departed after dinner to their several occupations, Miss Macalpine drew a letter from her pocket. "Well, Alpinia," said the General, "I see you're

'Big with the fate of Cato and of Rome.'

Let us hear it at once."

"Keep me, General! but I scarcely know how to begin. I ha'e gotten a letter from Lord Mowbray:"—and there she stopped, rubbing the forefinger of her left hand as if she would have rubbed it off.

"A proposal of marriage, doubtless," said the General, smiling cunningly (it is an odd thing that even the best-hearted people always make joke of an old maid: the kindest thing that is ever said of them is, 'Poor things! they are much to be pitied certainly').

"A proposal o' marriage, General! Guess again; better nor that, I can tell you."

"How can than be, Alpinia? Is it not what all ladies like to receive, whether they accept it or not?"

"But what would ye say, now, if I tell't ye, General, that Lord Mowbray has gie'n to me his grandaunt's estate o' Heatherden, out and out—gi'en them to me, for my ain sel'."

"Say! what should I say? Why that it was nobly done, bravely done; *and that I rejoice* at it with all my heart."

"Read these lines, General," said Miss Macalpine, tendering him a letter. He took it and read aloud.

"My dear Madam,—I know it was my cousin's intention to have done that, which I have done, namely, to put you in possession of Heatherden; but his sudden illness prevented him from executing the deed, which lay prepared for that purpose. I am, therefore, only fulfilling his intention in completing this arrangement, and I have very great pleasure in informing you that I have now finished this business, and that, as soon as it is convenient, I shall hope to see you in town, where your presence will be necessary to the signature of some of the papers respecting this transaction. I have the honour to be, with much esteem and regard, &c. &c. yours,—MOWBRAY."

"Oh! my dear, dear Alpinia, how very happy I am!" replied Lady Emily, overcome with a thousand sweet feelings, the source of which she did not very minutely analyze, and throwing her arms round Miss Macalpine's neck.

"A noble deed, truly," rejoined the General; "I am sorry to add, for the sake of human nature, a rare and an uncommon deed; the gift, and the manner of the gift, speak the character of the man; so simple, so unostentatious!"

"Is it not quite delightful?" cried Lady Emily, her eyes sparkling with delight, her cheeks glowing with pleasure.

"It is, indeed, my dearest, and I give our worthy friend, Miss Macalpine, a thousand joys, and may the setting of her sun be brighter than its rising!"

"We 'll no' speak o' what canna be mended. I am thankfu': but happiness and Marian Macalpine can no' be ane.

'The flowers o' the forest are a' wed awa.'"

"My dear Miss Macalpine, there's many a green leaf lingers when the summer's blossom is gone; may these, at least, be yours!—when a moment of brightness comes, it is a duty to bid it welcome."

"True; but did ye ever hear of ony thing happy occurring to ony ane, that they didna say, 'Oh, if such an ane were alive now to see it!' or 'oh, gin my health permitted me to enjoy it;' or, 'had I the strength o' limb, or o' eye-sight, or o' understanding,' or something or ither that they had not, which didna tak' a grace frae that which they had; this is the way o't; it must needs be sae here. Nevertheless, I am thankfu'."

"*Very true, my* good friend. There spoke the observer of human

nature in human affairs; but let us only talk now of your being the Lady of Heatherden, where I hope you will allow us to pay you a visit; that is to say, if I am alive this time next year."

"Oh, dear, dear uncle! do not suppose evil; think, as you yourself said, only of the brightness. As to me, I feel so happy, so happy that Lord Mowbray should have done this noble deed;" and she stopped short; "so happy, that I really do not know what I am saying."

Alas! how soon was the scene to change! A very few days after this, the General sent for Lady Emily. He was sitting in his usual red velvet chair; his one hand in his breast, his other resting on his knee; his gold-headed cane lay resting against his chair, and his favourite terrier slept at his feet; the whole costume was so simple, yet so noble, so suited to the wearer, that it seemed a part of the man; and it was impossible even for a stranger to stand in the presence of General Montgomery without blended feelings of love and respect.

Lady Emily's habitual affection and veneration for her uncle had latterly been deepened by the interest which his evident alteration of spirits and health inspired. On the present occasion, as she advanced towards him, she saw traces of strong emotion upon his countenance, though he appeared anxious to master himself in her presence; she lifted her eyes to Colonel Pennington, who was standing up behind the General, as if to inquire the cause of her uncle's evident distress, but she could only read a reflection of that sorrow in his expression, and he made no answer to her questioning glance, but kept his eyes fixed on the opposite wall.

General Montgomery first broke this portentous silence. "Sit down, my dearest and best, I have heavy news for you to hear, but it must be told, and young as you are, you are not unprepared to meet a reverse of fortune."

"My dear uncle, while you live and love me, I can bear any thing; but tell me, but tell me quickly, what it is I am to bear. Is Frances ill? Is——"

"No! no, my child, nothing of that kind. It is the total ruin of fortune that I have to announce to you."

"Is that all?" said Lady Emily, as if a weight were lifted from her heart as she spoke.

"I have for some time past," continued the General, "been expecting, something of the kind, and now the storm has burst; for myself, it *matters little* whether I spend the remainder of my days

in comparative poverty, or not; but, I grieve to say, the stroke has not fallen on me alone. Your and your sister's fortunes have also been implicated in the great general wreck. In me, you see a man ruined in point of fortune, beyond recovery! In yourself, my own best Emily, one who has been led into much loss, by the imprudent speculation of him, whose experience ought to have guarded you from such a fatal chance; but it is in vain to lament! You will forgive me, although I never forgive myself."

"Forgive! dearest uncle, it is but to try your own Emily, that you use such a word. Colonel Pennington, speak, I beseech you!" (seeing General Montgomery was too much overpowered to do so); "speak! and tell me what my uncle means! surely he is not angry with me! surely he does not doubt the affection, the reverence of his own Emily!"

And as she said this, she took the rough hand of Colonel Pennington between her delicate fingers. He struggled for a moment to conquer his feeling; but in the attempt to speak he could no longer command them, and burst into loud sobbing. "Come, my good friend Tom, I expected better behaviour from you, than this woman's weakness," said the General.

"It is Lady Emily's fault; I never wept before in my life!" replied Colonel Pennington, walking to the window.

General Montgomery was the first who composed himself sufficiently, to relate the particulars of the event he had announced. He had been persuaded by his plausible agent, Aldget, to embark the bulk of his disposable property, and part of his nieces, fortunes in some mining speculation in America, which was to produce thousands *per cent.!* according to Mr. Aldget's calculations. "And," continued the General with a deep sigh, "for reasons which I am not at liberty to explain, I do not feel justified in incurring the expenses which my continuing to reside at this place in my accustomed manner would entail upon me."

Colonel Pennington here interrupted him with an expression and look of surprise. Without noticing, however, this interruption the general proceeded: "You see, therefore, there is nothing left for me, but to abandon this seat of my ancestors, and to retire into some distant province, where the little that is left from my profession will suffice to support an old man for the few years he has to remain on earth. But to leave these dear children, whom I have always considered as my own, and to have made them in a *great degree the* sufferers of my imprudent desire to increase their

fortune already small, which did not justify a risk; this imprudence will, in truth, bring down my grey hairs with sorrow and dishonour to the grave!"

"Dishonour! General," exclaimed Colonel Pennington; "if any man but yourself, that walks the earth, had coupled such an epithet with General Montgomery's name, it should have been the hardest morsel he ever swallowed; but he should have eaten it up nevertheless!" and he puffed out his cheeks, and walked up and down the room, repeating "dishonour! indeed!"

"And is this really all, my dearest uncle? why should the loss of money separate us? nothing shall separate us, please God! You know, you used to say to me when I was a child, to check my pride, that I should be your little housekeeper, and now, I will really be such. only promise your own Emily you will never send her away from you. I will serve you, tend you, watch you, but leave you!—never!"

"There spoke the heart of my own child Emily; you have been tried by me, and are not found wanting! What have I to lament? nothing! not all that fortune can bestow, would give me the riches of this moment!"

The touching expression of heartfelt disinterested attachment on the one hand, and of grateful love on the other, was altogether overpowering to Colonel Pennington; he sobbed and beat his breast, and an oath once or twice escaped him in the honest ebullition of his feelings. "My good friend Tom, you will oblige me by walking into the garden and composing yourself. I require all my own fortitude to fulfil my duties, to collect my thoughts, and to give orders to my Emily; leave us for a time, and we shall meet better prepared for what we have to undergo."

The Colonel walked away, banging the door after him, as though he had been in a passion: and when the General and his niece were left alone, the latter said to her, "Now, my dear child, we must turn our thoughts to these domestic cares and arrangements which seem in moments of great interest to be beneath consideration, but they are not so; nor is it intended by a merciful Providence that they should; on the contrary, they are wisely appointed as the softening medium through which we are obliged to view our sorrows, and they place certain restraints on the feelings, which are salutary."

"If you will give me your orders, my dearest uncle, they shall be carefully obeyed," was Emily's gentle and composed reply.

"That *is my sweet and* quiet Emily;" and she proceeded to take

down notes in writing of the directions he gave her, with the same placid tranquillity she would have manifested on any subject of happier moment. When, in making an inventory of the books and a few articles of every-day comfort which were to follow them to their retreat, the eye of General Montgomery rested on Lady Emily's harp: "*That*," he said, "my sweet child, shall never be absent from us, neither shall your piano; no! never will I consent to be without *these!* They were our sweetest delights in the hour of prosperity; they may be our sweetest solace of lighter kind in adversity."

Emily felt this deeply; but she would not excite her uncle's feelings by giving unnecessary vent to her own, and contented herself with gently pressing his arm. "There's my own comfortable and useful child, not only my dearest but best. It is, perhaps, the privilege of woman only to extract the sting of grief from others by the gentle patience with which she is taught by Nature to set the example of meek endurance. Her first step, in the career of duty, is generally by the bed of sickness or of suffering. There, she hushes helpless infancy to repose; and to the infirmity of age supplies the sweetness of cheerful patience. It is her province to smooth the angry passions, to allay the violence of intemperate man, to divert or soothe the querulousness of peevish fretful tempers. It is hers, in fine, to be a peace-maker on earth; and let her not disdain this her allotted career, nor ever swerve from it. It has not the promise of this world's beatitudes or glories, but it is blessed, and it is glorious nevertheless; and oh! above all, let not those who ought to cherish and foster these gentle virtues, endeavour to stifle or eradicate them by substituting in their place the excitements of frivolous vanities, and the empty cares of dissipation."

Never woman performed the part of woman with better or with sweeter grace than the meek-spirited Emily. Her uncle had hitherto only loved, but now he honoured her. "Deep are the ways of Providence, and past finding out!" said Miss Macalpine, a few days after this sad story had been disclosed: "little did I ever think to see the day—I, a rich woman, and the General, General Montgomery, a puir man! wha'd ha'e thought it?—but ye'll all come to Heatherden, Lady Emily, and live wi' me; and then, I suppose the Government will be settling a pension on the General for past services."

"*Ah! my dear* Alpinia! past services are considered as dead let-

ter; and at my uncle's age, with my uncle's feelings, and the strong-rooted attachment he has to this spot, a spot which he himself has created, and where, in the barren heath, he has opened as it were a paradise in the wild, I do not think that any thing in the world, or any riches, will ever compensate to him for being banished hence."

"Hech, Sirs; at the gloaming o' life it's sair to bide; but there are mony places whaur the General might sit down in ease and comfort for the rest o' his days though he hadna a bodle left; for he is no' a man to greet for mere splendours and superfluities: and mony's the ane in his ain cuntrie wuld be honoured wi' his presence—there's Heatherden——"

"True," interrupted Lady Emily, "my uncle will not miss his luxuries and state, at least not for his own sake; but I observe that in aged persons there is nothing so difficult as to make them like any thing that is new. Either they dread incurring the pains and penalties always attendant upon loving any thing, and therefore narrow the circle of their attachments as much as possible; or else they have a slowness of affection, just as an aged tree does not shoot out as many green offsets as a young one, but holds with greater tenacity to the spot where it grows."

"Woe's me! but that's true; I find it in mysel'; I never could loe ony place, no' this same, as I loe the braes o' Heatherden. Oh Emily, dautie, ye'll come and see me there! Ane wad think Lord Mowbray kent ye wad ha'e to warsle wi' poortith when he gied me that noble gift; it's just the same as it were yere ain. As for the General, let him go whaure he will, he has a comfort in you that will never forsake him: you're just ane to cheer awa' the gloom o' a winter's night, with a spirit in your gentleness that pits a heart intilt."

Lady Emily loved these commendations, and determined to endeavour to deserve them; but she was called away from the indulgence of listening to such kind words, by General Montgomery's desiring her to walk with him: away she flew.

The alacrity with which the minor courtesies of life are performed, is precisely that which gives them their greatest charm. Emily was by the General's side quick as his own wish. Instead of offering her his arm, as was his wont, he leant this time on hers, and she felt this little change, as much as to say, 'You are now my only stay and support on earth.' They spoke not, nor had they need of *words to understand* each other's sensations and thought-

they continued to walk on in silence to the garden; their eyes mutually wandered over the welk-known shrubs and flowers. The General stopped: he shaded his eyes with one hand from the sunbeam while he gazed on a fine rising bank of trees that were waving their green tops in gentle undulation, like the swelling of the ocean to a breeze. Emily ventured to steal a glance at her uncle's countenance; it was placid, but so marked with sorrow that it was with difficulty she restained her tears. Again he moved onwards, and they came to the seat on which the General's lines from Horace were inscribed. He closed his eyes as if to drink in the essence of the words; and recited them in the original. So often was he in the habit of quoting passages from the Latin classics, that Lady Emily fancied she understood them; at least, from his translations she had been taught to feel their pathos, and the *quando ego te aspiciam* sunk deep into her soul. She ventured to say—"Perhaps, dear uncle, we may sooner return here than you at preseut believe."

"No, my Emily, do not deceive yourself; I have more reasons than even those which I have disclosed to you for thinking we shall never return; but I ought not to repine; I am, doubtless, chased from this paradise for my sins."

"Oh! say not so, dearest uncle—not for your sins—*you* have *no* sins!—to try your virtue rather."

"Emily, Emily," he replied, with solemnity; "where is the being who walks this earth, that dares to say he has no sin?"

Lady Emily felt the rebuke, and blushed. "There are the trees I planted forty years ago," continued General Montgomery after a pause. "How vigorous and beautiful they seem! if there is any thing in this world that can be said to be sure to endure, it is a love of natural pleasures: they lead the mind into ways of pleasantness and paths of peace; they afford us occupation in youth, and beneath their shade and beauty we enjoy the most fitting and delicious reward of old age—repose. Every man should till the paternal field of which he is heir; plant his small forest, or his large, the number of acres adds or diminishes little from the pleasure; and the exercise of these tranquil, yet active employments, will have more effect in leading him to practise the virtues of social life, than unthinking persons are aware of. You remember the *Beatus Ille.* In its stanzas, my Emily, I read the fate which is henceforth to be mine; that fate which I have often envied, and to which I am not called. Instead of the 'Wife,' alluded to in the poem, you must be my com-

forter; and thus, in recollecting the wisdom of past ages, I have endeavoured, not in vain, to attain some of that tranquillity which it eulogises."

"Ah! my dearest uncle!" said Lady Emily, "that you, who feel all these delights so keenly, should be abruptly called upon to resign your favourite abode for any less dear to you, I scarcely can bear to think of."

"Hush! my Emily. In that consists the trial: we are not to choose our own trials; and, indeed, we should not know to choose them for our advantage, even if to do so were permitted us. No, my love, we are to receive those that are appointed to us with resignation."

No more was said by either uncle or niece; they had sighed their last sigh, and looked their last look, at all the dear-loved groves and glades, and returned together in silence to the house.

At length came the dreaded moment of departure. Steel our hearts as we may, the last, last moment of seeing what one loves—of leaving a spot endeared by a thousand recollections, is that uptearing of the roots of affection which lacerates the heart, and from which we vainly endeavour to shield ourselves.

The abandonment of a home we have formed, where we have made intimate acquaintance with every hill and dale, and tree and stone; where these have spoken that mute language which is known only to the lover of fields and the cultivator of the earth, that sweet silent language which has soothed our sorrows and heightened our joys, and which, unlike the world, is sweetest when we are saddest, ah! to be torn from all these endearing and endeared objects by circumstances as cruel as they are unexpected, is a trial which ends not with the first wrench of agony. It is an ever-renewing spring of regret, and can only be duly appreciated by those who have felt its bitterness.

The General and Lady Emily left the Hall with the benedictions of all their dependants; and if any thing could have softened the blow, it was the consciousness of having blessed others, and of being by them blessed in return.

CHAPTER XVI.

Whom call we gay? That honour has been long
The boast of vain pretenders to the name.
The innocent are gay; the lark is gay,
That dries his feathers, saturate with dew,
Beneath the rosy cloud, while yet the beams
Of day-spring overshoot his humble nest;
The peasant too, a witness of his song,
Himself a songster, is as gay as he:
But save me from the gaiety of those
Whose head-aches nail them to a noon-day bed. COWPER.

WHATEVER sorrow Lady Emily felt at leaving the scenes of her youth, whatever cloud had come over her from the unforeseen circumstances which had recently occurred, she was at an age when the excitement of novelty went far in dissipating her sorrows and her fears. General Montgomery lodged at a private hotel in Sackville-street, and did not announce his arrival to any of his town friends; wishing to escape with as little observation as might be, from a certain crowd of idlers, who he knew would be ready enough to flock around him, so long as they believed him to be gifted with wealth and the world's consideration; and as the moment was not yet come when he chose to declare his fallen fortunes, he dreaded the influx of these persons, which would, in some degree, rob him of his time and his tranquillity.

Yet he did not feel justified in entirely depriving his Emily of the possible chances which might occur of her making some valuable acquaintances in the world; and he determined therefore to write to Mrs. Neville, a person whom he had known from his earliest years, and request her to take charge of his niece during their stay in the metropolis; for although she had many ridiculous points about her, Mrs. Neville was esteemed by all, for the sterling truth and honesty of her character. It was hardly possible to suppose that the note could have reached its destination, ere Mrs. Neville came in person to reply to it. They heard her scramble from her carriage, and, scarcely allowing the servants time to put down the step, she had actually reached the room where they were, before General Montgomery and Lady Emily had recovered from their surprise. As she came up-stairs, she screamed to the waiter who attended her: "*How is the* General? I wonder what has brought him to town;

something unexpected, I am sure. It is beyond belief that he should come here so late in the season. I don't understand it. Well, to be sure, these stairs are so steep! let me sit down, I am quite out of breath. Oh! there you are—how do you do, dear Lady Emily? Out of my way, let me sit down; I cannot speak to any of you till I have rested myself. Well, such stairs! they would do for the Tower of Babel."

"I am truly happy to see you, my dear Mrs. Neville," said the General, approaching, and taking her hand; "and to see you looking so well."

"I wish I could return the compliment, with all my heart; but you look very ill indeed, my dear General. Why, what have you been about?" (taking him to the window, and staring in his face) "it is beyond belief, upon my honour it is! I never saw a man so changed in such a short space of time; but there's my Lady Emily too, as thin as a thread-paper! For my part I don't understand it—a pretty creature though, General! quite charming, truly, fat or thin; and as for Miss Macalpine, my friend there, she's much as she was. It is beyond belief how precisely she looks as she did ten years ago; charming, charming"—(aside to Lady Emily) "a perfect Egyptian mummy,"—(aloud) "but that is the comfort of growing old; then one don't care how one looks, does one, Miss Macalpine?"

"There's no' ane auld," said Miss Macalpine, reddening with anger, and forcing a smile at the same time; "there's no' ane auld, save ane whom we needna name in gude company; and I think aebody's right to keep themsels as neat and trimlike as possible. So lang's we are in the warld, we had better be as agreeable as we can, and no' mak' oursels like daft bodies, or gaberlunzie randies."

That was a hit at Mrs. Neville's dress and address, which, however, was quite lost upon her; for she never knew one word in ten that Miss Macalpine uttered. "Charming, charming!" said Mrs. Neville; "Miss Macalpine is so entertaining!"

"And," said that latter lady, going on with her own ideas; "and we suld aye be striving to be as pleasing as we can."

"Pleasing? hunch! hunch! pleasing! Yes, my dear Miss Macalpine, in a sort of a way; but not by our charms. You and I have not much chance in that way."

"It may be your way to be no' caring whatna figure ye are, but it's no' mine: we differ quite, Mrs. Neville,"

"Well, well, never mind! But, my dear General, I say, what was the story about the mask? It is beyond belief how it has been talked

over at least nine days, the usual life of a wonder in London! It is beyond belief how I heard of it wherever I went. Were you not very much shocked?"

This question brought back all sorts of terrific images to Lady Emily; she turned very pale, and said in a half whisper, "Do not, my dear Mrs. Neville, talk of that; I wish you would not bring back the remembrance of it."

"Ah, I suppose, General, that is the reason why you left the Hall at this unusual season. I don't wonder! Well, it is to me beyond belief, how you could bear to stay one minute there after such a mysterious affair; but I am delighted to see you: it is charming that you are come any how, though the London season is nearly over. Why the Opera closes in a fortnight: how unlucky! You will go to the levee on Thursday, General?"

"If I go any where;—but I am in town only on some very pressing business, and I do not think I shall leave my apartments except to take the air."

"But, bless me! where is Lady Frances all this time? I declare I had totally forgotten her;" and she laughed heartily at the idea: "now that is charming! well, to be sure! it is beyond belief."

"My sister is on a visit to the Duke of Godolphin's," said Lady Emily: "we expect them in town shortly."

"How very odd!—then depend upon it they are come; for I saw the Duke of Godolphin's carriage driving towards Whitehall just as I came here. And then, sauntering up St. James's-street, who should I see but Lord Mowbray, walking as if he could not help it, but looking very handsome in spite of himself. Well, to be sure! it is beyond belief, to observe what air will do. Air is every thing; it is more than beauty; for beauty does not always give it;—and it is better worth having, because it is not destroyed by time. Nobody knows what it is; but it is felt by every body. Oh! it is charming! it is beyond belief! By the way, they say my Lord is going to be married to Miss Juliana Dormer; but I don't believe a word of it. Lady Emily, what do you see out of the window, that you look so intently into the street?"

"I see," said Lady Emily, trying to speak freely,—"I see, what is a marvellous sight now-a-days, a very magnificent sedan-chair, with two footmen."

Mrs. Neville ran to the window: "Ah, bless me! This is beyond belief! Lady Glassington herself. Oh, I must run off. I see a door *open.*" *And* Mrs. Neville ran out upon the stair, just in time to meet

the enemy front to front. She attempted to slide past with a nod and a touch of the hand; but Lady Glassington, holding up in one hand a glove rather more soiled than befits a lady, and in the other a much-tumbled and not very white pocket-handkerchief, cried, in an authoritative tone—"Stop, Mrs. Neville, if you please, for one moment." Then advancing to the General, giving him her cheek to salute, first on one side, then on the other,—"Well, my dear General, forgive me for an instant!" And turning again to Mrs. Neville, her little fiery blue eyes rolling about in magnificent indignation:—"One would think," said she, "that General Montgomery lived at Rag Fair! Only look here!" (and she waved the gloves and the pocket-handkerchief alternately,) "'Mrs. Neville,' I said, 'must be here,' as I picked them up. It is certainly very strange, that having lived so many years in my society, and having heard my opinion on this subject so very often, you have not yet learnt to attend to these minor cares and duties. Ah! well may you be ashamed of yourself, and try to get out of my way. There, take your goods!"

The General and Lady Emily were enjoying the scene. "Well. to be sure! my Lady Glassington, your Ladyship should have a new order made for you, the Mistress of the Manners of the Age; but I only dropped them that you might have something to find fault with. —Hunch! hunch!" and she laughed heartily.

"I find fault, indeed! I find fault, truly! I, who never found fault with any body in my life. I appeal to the General!"

"Never!" he replied, stifling a laugh; "never!"

"I, who never was in a passion in my life, I appeal to the General! could almost be in one now to hear your impertinent nonsense; General, speak!"

"Never! certainly, never in a downright passion, except now and then. Once, you know, Lady Glassington, when we were all young and wild, and that I incurred your displeasure, when you threw a glass of water in my face!"

"I am surprised, General," hiding her wrath under an appearance of dignity, "that you should recall a scene, and before your own niece too, which it were wiser to forget altogether: although I certainly was not in the wrong. You remember the cream-cheese!"

"Oh! now," replied the General, laughing outright; "*il n'y a que moi qui ait toujours raison!* But my dear Lady Glassington! let us lay aside all these recollections, and allow me to inquire for your health, you are looking delightfully well! quite like your picture!"

"Charmingly! quite charmingly!" said Mrs. Neville; "my Lady Glassington outshines us all! But what's become of Lord Mowbray? for I saw him coming this way; I suppose he was frightened when he knew my Lady Glassington was here, and so went away again."

"Frightened!" said Lady Glassington, tossing up her head disdainfully; "I flatter myself, that the insignificant and the ill-bred may not choose to come uncalled into my presence; but why my Lord Mowbray should be frightened for me, I cannot say."

"Oh! oh! oh!" laughing, "but I can though. You'll excuse me, my dear friend, for it is beyond belief how many people are afraid of you, and would sooner turn a corner to meet the east wind, than they would confront you! well, to be sure, nothing's more certain than that!"

Lady Glassington turned away in dignified silence, and addressing the General, she said: "But do tell me, General, what has brought you to this horrid part of the town. You are not, surely, going to stay here in this dull street; it is not fitting you should remain here. You will not surely keep your nieces in this situation?"

"I am sorry," said the General, "that you do not approve of my residence, Lady Glassington; but I purpose leaving London so soon, that where I live during my short stay is of very little moment."

"Well! but positively, short or long, you must not remain here!"

"Nay!" rejoined the General, with one of his sweetest smiles; "if you come to talk about positiveness, I can be positive too, and I do assure your Ladyship, I shall not remove from hence whilst I am in London."

"Well, General, I am the last person that ever interfered with any body's affairs, as you pretty well know; and all I can say, is, that I came to offer myself as chaperon to your nieces, unless you are already provided."

"I thank you; I have already bespoke the guardianship of my old friend Mrs. Neville, and she has promised that your Ladyship will unite with——"

"What! what! Mrs. Neville usher a young lady into the world! Mrs. Neville take charge of manners and decorum! You astonish me! indeed, I must confess, I should never have imagined——I have a great regard for Mrs. Neville, but I cannot say I should have ever thought of such a thing:" and she shook her petticoat in token of *disdain*.

The General assured her, that if he could have imagined, that with her many avocations, she could possibly have had time to escort a young lady to balls and operas, he would certainly have applied first to her; and, in saying this, his politeness trenched upon his sincerity; but he failed, nevertheless, of appeasing the ire of Lady Glassington. She had a *great regard* for her dear friend, Mrs. Neville; but that Mrs. Neville, whom, from long habit, she considered as under her tutelage, should be chosen in preference to herself, as the chaperon of a young lady of fashion, appeared incomprehensible; and drawing herself up, with one of her most frigid looks, she bid good morning, and swept out of the room. "*Her majesty the queen is in a passion*," said Emily, who could not help laughing, as she re-entered the apartment, for she had followed Lady Glassington out.

"Well, my dear Emily," said the General, "what is become of Mrs. Neville? and Alpinia, where is she? she has had a long conference with Lord Mowbray—did he not ask for us?"

"Oh! yes, my dear uncle, he did, only upon hearing that Lady Glassington and Mrs. Neville were here, he said he had not nerves for them, and would call another time. Mrs. Neville was in a great hurry, as she always is, to get out of Lady Glassington's way, and went off almost immediately, but promised to call to take us to the Opera to-night, if you have no objection."

"No objection in the world, my best child. Go; for I shall be delighted to think that you are amused, and I can entrust you to Mrs. Neville with perfect confidence: living her whole life in, or about the court, a reigning beauty at one time, Mrs. Neville has always, nevertheless, kept the straightforward path. She was a good wife to a bad husband, and having done her duty by him, declared that she would in future live a life of single blessedness, and she has kept her word, not for want of offers to do otherwise. The peculiar ingenuousness of her character has preserved her own native good qualities intacte, in the midst of a factitious world; all art is defeated by her simplicity, all manœuvring is vain with a person who never manœuvres. Mrs. Neville never did harm, that good might come of it. She is, perhaps, too sincere; at least, too out-spoken for the world as *it is;* and her manners, I do not desire you should imitate; she *sets up for an oddity*, as it is called, and much is allowed to her that would not be tolerated in another; but she is respected and respectable; knows every body; is of high family, and highly principled; *therefore*, my sweet Emily, to Mrs. Neville I will entrust

my greatest treasure; and whether she drops her gloves, or her pocket-handkerchief, or not, I had rather see you under her care, than in that of one, who, possessed of all the outward graces and proprieties in the world, which are calculated to shine in the world alone, if they are unaccompanied by her sterling good qualities. And now, Emily, I have some business to transact, and must not have any more inroads made upon my time. Good-bye, sweet child, till dinner. Yet stay—if Frances comes, I shall of course see her."

When Lady Emily was alone, she began to wonder that she had never heard from Frances since the latter had left them; for although the sisters were too unlike in disposition and in taste, to be a great loss to each other's hourly amusements, still Lady Emily's youthful heart had all the bloom of that beautiful iustinct fresh upon it which is implanted by the hand of the Creator; and she thought, that not to love one's relations, particularly any thing so near and dear as a sister, was quite impossible. While she sat musing upon this careless indifference in Lady Frances, a note was put into her hand; it was from her sister.

"I give you joy, my dear Emily, of being in town; how fortunate you are to have escaped so soon from that dull prison, the Hall. I thought there was some such hope in the wind when you professed yourself so mightily well pleased, not to remove thence: my love to my uncle, and say I shall wait upon him to-morrow morning. I did intend to have been with you to-day, but I cannot have the carriage. My best regards to Miss Macalpine. Yours affectionately. F. L."

It was a heartless kind of note: Lady Emily felt it was. Yet there was nothing positively to say against it. How many notes and letters are written of the same sort, that give heart-aches to those who receive them, and cost the writer no trouble at all! Lady Emily dispatched a tender one in return, with affection and delight, running over to the very turn-downs of the paper; and, in the pleasure of having heard from her sister, forgot the *manner*. She gave a translation of it, however, wisely, to her uncle, which came very much sweetened, through the fond medium of her affectionate interpretation. The disrespectful mention made of the General's favourite place, was what Emily felt to be unkind, so she left that out.

The intermediate hours between the morning and the dinner, were spent in certain arrangements of the toilette, in which all women, wise and foolish, young and old, can contrive to beguile a few hours occasionally, without putting any great force upon their inclinations.

During dinner Miss Macalpine entertained the General, and did not positively displease Lady Emily by sounding the praises of Lord Mowbray whom she declared to be a young man of *extraordinar' endowments;* and she continued in this strain, till the arrival of Mrs. Neville's carriage put a stop to her eloquence. Twice, during the few instants in which Lady Emily was putting on her cloak, and drawing on her gloves, a message was sent up from Mrs. Neville, to say—Mrs. Neville is *rather* in a hurry! she is afraid she shall be late."

"*Rather* in a hurry!" cried the General, laughing; "when was she not in a hurry? I shall not, however, detain you, for I am quite unable to go. Perhaps Miss Macalpine will have no objection to avail herself of my ticket." The offer was joyfully accepted by that lady. She had never in her life been to the Opera: and not Lady Emily, nor any girl of fifteen, could have been more enchanted at the idea of going. Miss Macalpine had an uncommon love for fine sights; and such a taste is not at all incompatible with great simplicity, and even romance of character. It sometimes subjects the person to ridicule; but it is unjust that it should do so. It is often a concomitant of that very simplicity of character, which was Miss Macalpine's particular characteristic, and certainly was no proof of want of high qualities, both of head and heart.

Notwithstanding Mrs. Neville's hurry and impatience, they found themselves early; the first scene of the 'Tancredi' was just over; there where few in the boxes; but to our two novices the whole spectacle was enchantment. Lady Emily's ear and taste, already formed to Italian music, received the utmost gratification, from hearing it performed to perfection; and her animated countenance expressed, without reserve, the delight she experienced, unlike the *nonchalant* manners of the greater part of the audience (of those in the boxes, at least), which might lead a beholder, unversed in the secret, to suppose they came there to perform some necessary but dull duty. This lively interest, on the part of Lady Emily, drew the attention of many persons, whose admiration and astonishment where alike excited by the novelty and charm of her appearance; so that the whisper of—"Who is she?" went quickly round the boxes, and she continued to be stared at during the rest of the performance.

In the meanwhile, Miss Macalpine was very busy, stretching out her neck right and left, and inquiring of Mrs. Neville the history of every one whose appearance struck her as being any thing distinguished. *The constant* "Wha's you?" accompanied by a push of

the elbow, would have provoked a less good-humoured person than Mrs. Neville, but it afforded this lady an opportunity to talk, and she certainly did love that better than most things. "Mrs. Neville," said her catechist, "do see yonder, the third box frae the stage, wha can yon be?—a bodie by himsel'! luking as though he were sound sleeping, wi' his legs upo' a chair, and his glove dangling owr the side of the box?"

Mrs. Neville had recourse to her opera-glass:—"Oh, that's Lounging Lepel! do you not remember him at the Fitzhammond's? why, he could not believe such a thing was possible, as that any person who had once seen him could ever forget him. So you really don't remember him? charming! I should like to tell him so, how he would stare! Thus much I can tell you of him; but as to who he is, that indeed I believe it would be difficult to do; for I do not suppose he even knows himself. He is one of those stop-gaps in creation, who, by dint of massive impudence and consummate flattery, alternately applied, make good the post they seize upon in the world. It is quite charming, I do assure you, to observe the rise, progress, and decay of this genus of fashionable life. Well, to be sure, it is curious; but some such there have been, and always will be, in the gay world; and indeed they are very amusing; it is beyond belief how they divert one. Lepel is seen every where; a party is not a party without him; a coat is not a coat if it is not made by Lepel's tailor. A snuff-box cannot be fit for a gentleman's pocket, unless it be sanctioned by the fiat of his approbation. Well, to be sure, it is beyond belief, but quite true; he has neither fortune nor rank, beauty of person or brilliancy of parts, or depth of learning; and by sheer impudence is king of the fools. Well, to be sure, it is quite charming!—however, I prophesy he is in progress towards decay, for he has overshot the mark lately two or three times, in various instances; and that impudence which placed him on an eminence, where he has no right to be, will hurl him back to his native mire—that will be charming! and then you know we shall have some new fugle-man to head the ranks of fashion, and give us the cue for our follies. Well, to be sure, it will be a change, but only a change; for the same parts must always be played in the great drama of the world, only by different actors."

"And wha's yon queer-like chiel there in the pit? the auld bodie wi' the glasses. No' a bit but he's unco fearsome like; keep me, but he's just like a corpe!"

"*That's my Lord* Delafield; he has held the same course any time

these twenty years. He never misses a theatrical exhibition, is the intimate friend of the whole *corps de theatre*, from the Prima Donna down to the candlesnuffers. He has a fine place which he never visits, an amiable wife whom he detests. His tenantry are racked, and his estates destroyed to fill the pockets of opera-dancers and singers. Isn't it charming?"

"Hech, Sirs! but it's curious that same; now, Mistress Neville, if I'm no' intruding upon yere courtesy, wha are yon twa bonnie young folk that seem sae taen up wi' ane anither; but maybe ye'll no fasche to tell me ony mair just ee now. Hech, sirs! they luke as if they were just gawing to be merried."

"Married!" said Mrs. Neville, laughing, "why they've both been married some years."

"Troth, then, but it's a pleasure to see twa beings sae fond like, after some years o' matrimony."

"Well, you are charming, quite beyond belief! Why, my dear Miss Macalpine, that is only a Flirtation, or perhaps worse, but the world agrees to call it a Flirtation. They are both married, and the husband of the lady and the wife of the gentleman are probably on their parts playing exactly the same game." (Miss Macalpine lifted up her hand and eyes.) "Why you do not really suppose that love, such as you read of in books, exists in the world of fashion?—No, no! nothing beyond Flirtation is tolerated; when it goes openly farther, then away the parties go—for a time disappear or do not disappear—are only supposed to be invisible. A divorce ensues; and after a few years, perhaps a few months, if the parties are sufficiently great and powerful, or handsome and agreeable, to obtain absolution quickly, back they come on the scene with a change of name; and they both, as married people, begin to grow tired of each other in their turn, and commence new Flirtations. Well, to be sure, it is beyond belief, to observe how the same routine goes round; why it is as regular as the return of the seasons—charming! But you do not suppose that the red-hot love lasts after the chill of matrimony has passed over it!—No, no; Flirtation comes in like a master of the ceremonies to hand Love off the boards very quickly."

"The mair's the pity, the bigger's the shame; but it's no' to be believed folk would go on sic na gait as thae twa in the blaze o' this lamp o' light, no' a bit but it's awfu'. I'm grieved the lassie should see sic na things:" pointing to Lady Emily.

"Oh, she!—she's devouring the music. She hears nothing but

Caradori's 'Quanto dolce nell' alma.' I hope Lady Emily will never be in the fashion, but get well married quickly to some good man, who will guide her youthful steps—and that will be charming! charming!"

"I wish it, wi' a' my heart. But whatna heap o' fine folk are yon just come in at the stage-box? no' a bit but she's a bonnie leddie yon same; and hech, sirs! she's a power o' gentry round her."

"Oh, that is the famous supreme, the woman who is the queen of the ton. She has climbed to the very topmost bough, and that pretty little wren sitting by her is striving hard with her busy wings to hop after her. They and their set give themselves a great many ridiculous airs, and for that very reason they are suited to the place they hold. Well, to be sure, it is impossible any body could be more so. I never saw any corps de ballet more perfect than they are in their parts; and, to be sure, I have seen many such, since I first came out in life. It's charming! charming! to see how vain, and proud, and silly they make themselves, and how the still more foolish multitude play into their hands. It makes me die of laughing; but, notwithstanding all that, people remember who they were, and say every now and then—'But why has the barber's granddaughter, or the fishmonger's, or the perfumer's, a right to do so and so?' It is beyond belief, when their backs are turned, how their dear friends pull them to pieces.—It's quite charming!—isn't it charming? Observe, Miss Macalpine, that quiet-looking lady who sits alone there in her box. That is a really great person, who never gives herself any airs, forms no exclusive circle, unless it be that the sterling great and good seek her society; who belongs to no sect of fashionable folly, and yet contemns no one who lives in the world; who can command its smiles, yet never courts it by those petty restless arts on which, and by which, the others live, and move, and breathe.—Oh, it is quite charming, to see how she's hated, but they dare not show their hatred either. It is *charming*, *charming*, *charming!* to see the real old nobility shining out splendid in its tranquillity amid the tinsel glare of the *ton*. Well, to be sure, it is beyond belief; but then remember, Miss Macalpine, these really great people are *not* the fashion of the day."

"No' a bit but it's a pity."

"Pity! not a bit of it; no such thing, Miss Macalpine; its charming! charming! I tell you it's a glory, not a pity."

At that moment Lord Mowbray came into the box. Lady Emily,

who had been sitting absorbed in what was passing on the stage, at the sound of his voice turned quickly round, and with her whole countenance beaming with sudden and inexpressible delight, could hardly refrain from thanking him for his generosity to Miss Macalpine. That noble trait in his character had been uppermost in her mind ever since she knew of it; she had dwelt upon it by day, and dreamt of it by night; and she found it almost impossible not to talk of what had so completely and so deliciously employed her thoughts.

Lord Mowbray modestly attributed Lady Emily's joy at seeing him, to this cause, and to this alone; while she, on her part, accounted to herself for it in no other way, which left her at perfect liberty to show the full tide of the delight she experienced at meeting him again, unrepressed by any consciousness of a tender sentiment. "It is very new, and very grateful to the feelings," said Lord Mowbray, "to find any one so exactly the same in town as in country. I felt rather nervous just now at the idea of coming into Mrs. Neville's box; but as I have for some time observed you from the pit engaged entirely with what was passing on the stage, I conceived that I might venture to steal in, determined not to interrupt your amusement, by my conversation, at least, but merely make my bow and retire again. As it is, perhaps, you will allow me to remain a few minutes."

"You knew, then, that we were here," said Lady Emily, a cloud passing over her brow; "you knew that we were here; you even saw us, and did not come directly to us: how very odd."

"Odd! was it, indeed, so?" replied Lord Mowbray, colouring with pleasure: "well, then, I promise you it shall never be so again: but perhaps——"

"Perhaps what?"

"Oh, nothing," he said; and leaning back in his chair, his manner prevented Lady Emily from pressing the subject farther. After a few minutes' silence, (that is to say, between her and Lord Mowbray; for the two *chaperons* ceased not talking for a moment,) the latter inquired for the General.

"I thank you, my dear uncle is well; that is to say, pretty well." And again, that mutability of expression, which varied with every varying sensation, threw a dark shade across her countenance; and the words "pretty well" were slowly and faintly repeated.

"I am afraid," replied Lord Mowbray, with that deep but tender intonation *of voice, which once* heard was never forgotten,—"I am

afraid, then, by your manner of speaking, that the General is not so well as *we* could wish."

"*We* could wish!" repeated Lady Emily, to herself, laying an emphasis upon the *we*. How the little monosyllable thrilled through her frame! "No, he is not, I grieve to say it, by any means so well as we, who love him dearly could wish. You know, we have had some sorrowful, some awful events at the Hall." And she shuddered as she spoke.—"Has not Miss Macalpine told you?"

"She mentioned something of a mask and a mystery."

"Oh! Lord Mowbray, I cannot speak of it here—here, where the glare and the gaiety, and my own thoughts," (passing her hand across her brow,) "are so unsuited to the solemnity of the subject; but when you come to see us, then I will tell you every thing, every thing which I am at liberty to tell; but——"

"But what? Pray, proceed."

"Oh!" she answered, recollecting herself, "there are some things which I may not——"

"Do not keep me in suspense, Lady Emily, if, indeed, you are so good as to confide in me: there is no place where one is more completely alone than at any great public assembly, especially an opera; every body is thinking of their own affairs, their own vanity, their own Flirtation; nobody has time to think of their neighbour."

"Indeed!" said Lady Emily, who found that her own chair had insensibly slid back in the box close to Lord Mowbray's, and that the hum around her had produced that sort of indefinite confusion in her brain, which renders it easy to abstract one's thoughts, and fix them on any subject, however little analogous to the place. She took courage, and began to recount the events of the portentous evening when the masked man had first arrived at the Hall; when, just as she came to the most interesting part of her story, a deafening burst of applause from the whole audience made her lean forward over the box; and Mrs. Neville exclaimed—"The Rosalinda! the new singer! Now, Lady Emily, no more talking. It is the fashion to listen to *her*!"

It was Rosalinda herself; and after Lady Emily had gazed at her for a minute in rapturous admiration, she turned to express this feeling to Lord Mowbray; but at this instant the box-door shut suddenly, and Lord Mowbray was gone.

"Well, to be sure! it is beyond belief!" cried Mrs. Neville. "How strange that Lord Mowbray is! I cannot make him out at all.

He comes and goes, like a man in a harlequin farce—nobody knows how."

Lady Emily's countenance betrayed too visibly all that passed within, not to show that what gave the greatest interest to the scene, in her estimation, was departed. Nevertheless, she listened with an aching heart to the tones of the Rosalinda: others *admired*—she *felt* their power. Her eyes wandered round the house in vain to see Lord Mowbray; but, unaccustomed to distinguish objects in the glare and confusion of a public place, she deemed it very likely that he might be present, and yet that she could not discover him. Weary with hoping, and her eyes fatigued by seeking perpetually for that which they never found, she felt relieved when the curtain dropped. "Well, to be sure! it is beyond belief! What an odd man that Lord Mowbray is! always flies off like lightning!" repeated Mrs. Neville, as they rose and prepared to leave the box; "a perfect *ignis fatuus*, I declare. But he is very original—not cut out upon any body else's pattern: and then, the charm of being perfectly natural! Well, to be sure! *that is* charming. Altogether, he diverts me exceedingly. Come, come along; we shall be in the midst of the crowd, and I shall never get to my carriage."

It was all Lady Emily and Miss Macalpine could do to follow her as she elbowed her way through the press of people. Apologies mingled with laughter, were heard all round about; but Mrs. Neville pursued her victorious way, and made good an excellent position for seeing and being seen. In the waiting-room, Mrs. Neville found many acquaintances, and became so deeply engaged in conversation, that though her equipage was announced to be ready, she never listened to the summons; and when reminded by Lady Emily that they would be detained half the night if the carriage drove off, Mrs. Neville said, "Well, to be sure, we may; never mind, my love, never mind; I am vastly well amused, I hope you are?" and suddenly catching hold of Mrs. Fitzhammond, as she was passing, she held her fast, saying, "You must come and tell me what you think of the new work. 'East and West' is an excellent name, isn't it? it comprehends so much, and it does not disappoint you in that; there is a great deal in it more than many people will like; but let the 'galled jade wince;' it is beyond belief how many people look frightened!"

"Frightened!" said Mr. Lepel, who had overheard this conversation, while employed examining Lady Emily; "delighted, you

mean; the generality of people live only upon being talked *of*, or *at*, no matter which, *or how*."

"You speak your own sentiments," rejoined Mrs. Neville; "*you* live upon it; but many others do not like the idea, I can tell you, of being hauled over the coals."

"Vulgar!" exclaimed Mr. Lepel, loud enough to be overheard, and turned away.

"For my part," continued Mrs. Neville, "I think it may do them all a vast deal of good, if they will only take the covert hints it contains."

"My dear Mrs. Neville, did you ever hear of books doing any body any good?" said Mrs. Fitzhammond; "I mean, any body of fashion: few read, and still fewer think of them."

"Oh, for the matter of that, EAST AND WEST is not very deep; and yet in one or two places there is something to touch the feelings, too."

"Its being dedicated to Lord Mowbray, is the circumstance which obtains for this novel so much celebrity, I believe," rejoined Mrs. Fitzhammond. "I am told there is some allusion to himself; and all the mammas, who want him for a husband for their daughters, are interested in finding out the enigma."

During this conversation they had reached the staircase, which was very much crowded; and Emily, as she leant upon the balustrade, heard just beneath her a voice which made her start: it was too loud in its tone for propriety, too sweet in its sound for vulgarity; it proceeded from a beautiful female, who, dressed in the extreme of fashion, with a gentleman on each side, was leaving the pit. Lady Emily looked and looked till she was bewildered: she thought she knew the face, the voice; but dress and rouge, and a totally changed expression, so perplexed her, that for a length of time no distinct recognition came to her of the person; till suddenly a laugh, such as she had heard in green lanes, when culling violets, left her no doubt that she looked upon Rose Delvin. She turned pale—she felt faint—she could hardly support herself; Mrs. Neville pushed on, and in the next moment they were at the bottom of the staircase. Emily found herself for an instant in absolute contact with the object of her solicitude "Rose," she said, in a low voice, and with an emotion she could not suppress, "Oh, what do you here?"

The unhappy girl started, and, uttering a loud scream, seized *Lady* Emily's arm. "See, she is ill! she will faint. Mrs. Neville,

acalpine, it is Rose. Oh, save her, save her!" There was
al commotion, and Lord Mowbray came up among some
"Are you not well, Lady Emily? what is this?"
, it is poor Rose! those men are taking her away; save her,
er back to me!"
retched girl! I can do nothing. Lady Emily, this is no
or you; let me put you into the carriage; every eye is on
d you tremble:" he pressed her arm in his as she leant upon

Neville utterly confounded, and Miss Macalpine horror-
n, followed them: the former overpowered Lady Emily with
ns, but she was in no condition to answer; she sat, over-
with sorrow, shame, disgust, every way distressed. She
ay to a passion of tears. She felt she had made herself con-
us in a most unworthy cause, and she wept incessantly till the
e set them down at the hotel.

CHAPTER XVII.

The morning rose that untouch'd stands
Arm'd with its briers, sweetly smells;
But, pluck'd and stain'd by ruder hands,
The sweet no longer with it dwells:
When scent and beauty both are gone,
Then leaves fall from it one by one!

Such fate, ere long, will thee betide,
When thou hast handled been awhile,
With sear flowers to be thrown aside;
And I shall sigh, while others smile,
To think thy love for every one
Has brought thee to be loved by none. OLD SONG.

HEN Lady Emily awoke the next morning, she scarcely knew
e she was; a sense of oppression was at her heart, but she
not at first clearly recollect its cause. This temporary uncon-
sness, however, soon yielded to a distinct recollection of the
of the preceding night, together with all its painful particulars.
rrible London!" she said; "why did I ever come into it, if such
s as those are indeed as common as Mrs. Neville represents
to be?"
w beautiful is the first purity of youth, which feels itself con-
ated by any approximation to vice, and thinks itself sullied even

in the knowledge which life too soon imparts, that such things are. It is a cruel lowering to the spirit, this first recognition of the fallen estate we are doomed to witness in others; and not only witness in others, but to acknowledge in some shape and in some degree is also our own. Yes, this knowledge, is contrary to the pride of our nature, and yet it is the first step towards that perfection of our being to which it tends, but which it cannot attain to upon earth. "Oh, Rose, Rose!" exclaimed Lady Emily; and her tears flowed afresh, as the thoughts of what she had been, and what she now was, returned; "Oh, my poor Rose, could you but see your miserable mother as I have seen her! Did you but know that your farther has left his home in quest of you, and is a wanderer, houseless and wretched, for your sake; you would certainly return and expiate your error by a life of penitence, and in tending that remaining parent, whom your conduct has reduced to utter helplessness. Oh yes! you may yet be snatched from pursuing a course of infamy! Though your good name be lost on earth, it may be retrieved in heaven; and if I can but be the means of doing this,—oh, if I can! —I shall think nothing on my part, that is not unworthy, too great a sacrifice for such an end."

When Lady Emily met the General, he immediately inquired how she had been amused the preceding evening. "I was much delighted at first, dear uncle, only——"

"What was the *only?* give me none of your *onlys*. When my Emily's amusement or happiness is concerned, I cannot bear an *only*. And let me look at you, dear one,—why your eyes are red, you have been crying!"

"I have, dear uncle! and all the pleasure I might have experienced was, I confess, totally lost in the melancholy discovery I made of Rose's present mode of life." Here she related to the General what had come to her knowledge in the lobby of the Opera House. "Bad news, indeed," said the General; "though I expected little else."

"But what can we do, my uncle, to snatch her from her terrible fate?—what can we do?"

"Alas! my dear one, I fear that nothing which we can say or do, will be of any avail at present. By your description of her, she is surrounded with all that luxury and pleasure and vanity can give to deceive her as to the real degradation of her situation."

"Perhaps so, uncle: but then, if she could but know of her poor mother's state—of her father's!—then, oh then! without a doubt her

heart would melt, and she would loathe her finery and her riches."

The General shook his head—"Dearest, you have yet to learn that, nine times out of ten, sensual indulgence closes the heart to all natural affections; particularly when it acts upon persons in a low sphere of life, who, having never been used to luxury, are, as it were, more completely sunk and lost in the abyss which it opens beneath their feet. In those who move in the highest spheres, the end is the same, but the process is at least slower, and less discernible; the circle of their attachments may extend even to all their *own* relations, or to those persons who minister immediately to their daily comforts and diversions; such as to the servants who attend them, the charities which cost them no trouble and which bring in a return of praise. But even to these gentler souls, designed by nature for better things, self-indulgence, though of more gradual process and less visible degradation, is not less certain in its ultimate effect. Acting upon one in Rose's condition of life, you cannot but suppose the poison has been rapid, and its fatal power irreparable. It may please God, when misery and want shall stare this unhappy girl in the face, as doubtless they will do, that then she may repent; but I see no prospect of it till then. You must for the present dismiss that unworthy Rose from your thoughts. She is no longer a fitting companion for my Emily, even in thought."

That gentle being wept in silence for some little time, but recovering her composure as quickly as she could, said, "I am sure you are in the right, my dear uncle; I will endeavour to obey you, but you know the heart is a wayward child;" while a faint smile irradiated the tear which stood in her eye. "It is enough, dearest; we will dismiss the painful subject."

At that moment the door opened, and Lady Frances was announced. "What! so early, Frances, my Queen! why really London works wonders, if it conjures you out of your bed at so matinal an hour."

"I wished to find your alone, my dear uncle; for I have tidings to announce, which I think will give you pleasure."

"I am delighted to hear any thing which gives *you* pleasure, my dear, as you well know, and have always proved; and without pretending to any skill in necromancy, I can see by your manner that of such nature is the intelligence which you have now to impart."

"Well, my dear uncle! what if I should tell you that a—a certain gentleman will probably present himself ere long, to request your consent to *making me his wife*?"

"Already, Frances!" said the General; and he turned very pale, and his countenance changed.

"Nay, now uncle! I pray you do not look so grave. I assure you this is no sentimental, whining love story that I am come to interest you about; neither do I wish to claim your indulgence for any low or even unequal marriage."

"Oh, I never suspected that!" interrupted the General.

She went on: "No, no, you must be convinced that never was *my* turn!" and she drew herself up. "It is the Marquis of Bellamont, son to the Duke of Godolphin, who solicits my hand; and as there does not exist one circumstance *qui blesse les bienséances*, you know it must be all right, and the world must approve. I hope, therefore, I may feel sure of obtaining your kind consent?"

"There certainly is not," said the General, "any thing, as you observe, against the marriage—at least, there is no apparent reason against it. And yet, that very world whose approbation you seem to ground such consequence upon, and to rely on for every chance of happiness, may condemn this projected alliance. Oh, my dear Frances! prepare yourself for a dreadful disappointment."

"Disappointment, uncle!" echoed Lady Frances, reddening with a mingled sentiment of fear and anger; "My age, my rank, my education, my fortune, every point is on a par with Lord Bellamont. Propriety, dignity, and a prospect of happiness, I confess, seem to me to attend this proposal. How then can I fear a disappointment?"

"Frances, in this world nothing is certain. Speak not so proudly, unhappy girl! It is for your wretched uncle to hurl you from this height of security and greatness, and to tell you that you have no fortune left."

"Surely, Sir, you are jesting! Why it is but yesterday that I told Lord Bellamont, I had thirty thousand pounds in the funds!"

"You *had!* my dear niece, and your unfortunate uncle has been the means of making you lose every penny of it."

Here, while Lady Frances sat in mute astonishment and dismay, the General explained to her that, allured by the tempting, plausible reasoning of his legal advisers, he had been induced to give into the speculations of the times, which had brought thousands to ruin; and that, in the earnest hope of increasing the fortune of his nieces, he had in fact dissipated them entirely. "But," he added, "I had this circumstance to plead in extenuation of my folly, of my guilt,

if you will; which is, that I secured to you, as I thought, a sum equivalent to that I played with, on my own estate; and thus, as I conceived, screened you from all possible danger of losing in the transaction."

"Oh! then," eagerly exclaimed Lady Frances, with a sort of hysterical laugh, "no harm is done;—all may yet be well, since you, my dear uncle, with your wonted forethought, have had this prudent caution!"

"Alas Frances, it remains for me to add—with pain and grief of heart, for your sakes, I speak it,"—and his voice faltered almost to inarticulation—"I am myself, from the most unforeseen and improbable circumstances—circumstances in which I have not had any participation whatever—I myself am probably a beggar!"

He sunk back on his chair as he uttered these last words, overcome with a sense of remorse and sorrow, which preyed on his frame, and seemed to threaten him with some sudden convulsion, so awful a change passed over his benign countenance. "Dearest uncle!" cried Lady Emily, throwing her arms around his neck—"dearest uncle, calm your agitation; Frances and I only regret this on *your* account: do we, dear sister? Pray cheer up—all will be well, so that you only are well! Lord Bellamont, Frances, if he is worth the heart you destine him, will never be influenced by such a paltry consideration as money and——"

"I am sorry for my uncle, certainly," said Lady Frances, while a variety of feelings seemed struggling in her countenance; "but in an affair so delicate as the present, you must give me leave to say, I am sorry also on my own account."

"Frances," rejoined the General, rousing himself from the temporary weakness of overwrought feelings, "I have one word only to say to you, though I am but too well aware this is not a favourable moment for advice:—It is this—that if Lord Bellamont now remains true to you, you may well be a prouder, and are sure to be a *happier* woman, than had you brought him the dower of a princess. Oh, my dear niece! I earnestly hope that you may find it so!—at all events, send the young lord to me, and I will exonerate you from every shadow of imputation which might attach to you, of having wished to deceive. And you, my Emily, my gentle tender dove, come to the arms of your old uncle, and find the reward of your duty and affection in the exercise of those virtues which are 'twice blessed; blessed to the giver, and blessed to the receiver.'"

"Well!" said Lady Frances, with ill-concealed displeasure and

mortification, reddening in her before pale cheek; "I must go at present, and shall await the result of your conversation with Lord Bellamont." Thus having spoken, she bent forward to touch her uncle's forehead with her lips, and withdrew.

"What will become of that unhappy girl," said the General, "should this marriage go off?—and what a heavy weight it will add to that which is already lying here!" and he struck his breast.

"Let us not forebode evil, dearest uncle. I cannot suppose Lord Bellamont will forsake Frances; and, provided she is married, then you need not cast a thought upon the past. How happily you and I shall live together! We have the same tastes, the same pursuits; I shall fly about and fulfil your orders, and there will be the library and the flower-garden," (her uncle smiled affectionately) "and dearest uncle!" she continued, "I am determined to know every thing about the domestic arrangement, and do good to the poor, not by giving away things or money, which cost only the trouble of an order, but by really knowing what will be of lasting benefit to them, making their clothes, and distributing their medicines myself. Oh! we shall be so happy, dearest uncle, the day will not be long enough for all I shall have to do in it."

"You are, indeed, a good and a gracious creature, my own Emily. Heaven has gifted you with a felicitous disposition: remember, my sweet one, it will be a double sin in you to contemn or misuse the gift; but why do I give you this charge? you who are every thing that is kind, every thing that is amiable." And he kissed her forehead, and left her happy.

Yes, in her innocent aspirations after happiness, she was happy; but yet there was a secret worm at her heart! Where is the human heart that has no canker at its core?—The Opera and its many occurrences recurred with all their power of interest, to occupy her thoughts.—Rosalinda, and Lord Mowbray!—What was the mystery that hung upon these two persons?—What link of association existed between them?—Love it could not be, since Lord Mowbray evidently fled her presence. Hatred?—impossible: it was impossible to hate any one, according to Emily's feelings; and to hate such beauty, such an expression of every thing exalted as dwelt in the person of Rosalinda, was utterly, she conceived, out of nature; but that some secret connexion did exist between these persons she felt assured was the case, and she dwelt upon this till it almost made her forget every other subject.

Before the day passed, Lord Bellamont, the expected visitor,

arrived. Lady Emily was present when he was announced; and though he had been presented to them at the Fitzhammond's, still he had the awkwardness of a re-introduction to go through; yet his manner was so unaffected, so exceedingly pleasing, and his personal appearance so advantageous, that both the uncle and niece were impressed with the most favourable idea of his character—a character totally different to that which they had ascribed to a son of the Duke of Godolphin when they merely saw him in a mixed company, as they mutually confessed to each other after his departure.

"I am very thankful, truly grateful to Heaven," said the General, "that this young man's heart seems to answer to his noble exterior. He not only persists in his wish to become the husband of Frances, now that he knows that she is a portionless bride, but persists in such a generous and sincere manner, that I am certain it will depend upon herself whether or not she becomes one of the happiest of wives."

"I trust, she will be so," said Emily fervently. "Should she, however, slight the heart she has gained, after having secured its possession, she may meet with a justly merited treatment; but of this sad chance, Heaven forbid the fulfilment!"

"All I now fear," said the General, "is the opposition of the Duke of Godolphin, whose appreciation of the goods of fortune is at a very different ratio from that of his son's. He may not give his consent; and then there is more misery in store for us."

"I should hope, my dearest uncle, that this will not be the case; for surely, out of shame, he will not confess that the love of money would make him withdraw his approval."

The General smiled faintly, as he said, "This is not the shame which affects the people of the world. On the contrary, they would say, that they were acting only with parental prudence, in securing a proper equivalent of fortune to their child; and, under certain modifications, this is true; but it is an excuse too often made for the indulgence of selfish pride, prejudice, and avarice."

"Let us hope it will not be so, in the present instance, dear uncle."

"Ah! my dear Emily, give me your youth, give me the freshness of your unsullied heart, and I too shall entertain no fear!"

A few days of anxiety passed away; objections were made, difficulties were started on the part of the Duke of Godolphin; but the consideration of the long line of ancestry which graced Lady Frances's parentage, finally overcame all prudential reserve on the score of *fortune, and the* splendour of the nobility he considered as

an equivalent for the wealth of his coal-mines. Every thing respecting this union was ultimately agreed to, and the triumphant bride elect received the congratulations of all her acquaintance with a composed and self-satisfied air, which made the generality of her circle declare she was admirably well suited to fill the high station to which she was destined. Lady Glassington was one of the very first persons who came to pay their compliments on the occasion. There was a condescending protecting air of kindness in her manner which particularly amused the General. "Well, General," she said," I always told you Lady Frances Lorimer would prove true to the race from whence she sprang; I hope my Lady Emily will walk in her footsteps;" and she looked as if she did not believe in the likelihood that her wishes would be fulfilled. "Her sister has made a very praiseworthy choice, though to be sure the Godolphins are not of ancient nobility such as *we* can boast being sprung from; still they are high in their sovereign's favour, and possess enormous wealth, and have obtained a very high title; and, in short, want nothing but a little of that which your niece will bring into the family to render them one of the most distinguished of the realm."

"But what does your Ladyship think of the principal person concerned, of Lord Bellamont?"

"Oh that he is (considering what a set of young men we have in these days) a mighty well bred sort of person. The other night, at the Opera House, he saw me waiting for my carriage, and he called for it himself, and never left me till I was safe out of the crowd. When I was young, indeed, those manners were common: but now, they are so very rare, that one may well remark them if ever they are seen; it is a little trait, to be sure, in itself, but it speaks a world of things in his favour. Bless me! General Montgomery," (suddenly interrupting herself) "I wonder how you can poke the fire in that awkward manner. It is comical enough to have a fire lighted such weather as this—nobody, ah, ah, ah!" (laughing shrilly) "nobody but yourself, would think of such a thing; but since you choose to have one, let me show you how to poke it:" and she took the poker in a dictatorial manner out of his hand.

"What, not allow me to stir my own fire in my own house?" said the General, laughing.

"No, certainly not, while you do it so ill, and that I am by, to show you how it ought to be done; though I am surprised you have not yet learnt what it is to poke a fire properly, considering how very often I have instructed you in that point. See

here! you ought first to rake out the ashes at the bottom bar, and then put your poker a little to the left side; not too much, or you stand a chance of not reaching with it transversely quite through and through the whole length of the grate."

This speech was suddenly arrested by the well-known sounds of, "Well, to be sure, it is beyond belief. So, my Lady Glassington has got here before me. Well, I never expected that you would have made out arriving here first, for I saw your chair setting out just as I got into my carriage, and I calculated that I had time to make a few calls to Mrs. Fitzhammond, who is just arrived, by the bye, and Miss Frisby, and Lady Dickens, and one or two more places very little out of my road, and yet reach the General's before you; well, to be sure, it is beyond belief! how fast you must have driven!—Have you been yet to the Miss Frisby's? Lady Dickens gives her first dinner party—are you asked! it will be charming."

"My dear Mrs. Neville, one moment, I beg," rising with a dignified air from her seat and walking up to the General. I appeal to you, General, whether it is possible to answer all her questions at once?—did you ever hear such a confusion of phrases?—is it I ask, possible to know what Mrs. Neville would be at?"

The General bowed, and begged not to be made to give his decision on the present important subject. "Bless me, my dear Lady Glassington," retorted Mrs. Neville, "what signifies teazing the General about such nonsense, eh? Are we not both come to wish him joy, and not to dispute about straws. I vow it is quite charming to see what a passion you are in about nothing. Come, come, it is beyond belief, how silly we are! I, for my part, am here for the express purpose of making my congratulations; and I beg, my dear General, that you will believe nobody more sincerely wishes you and yours well than I do. This is quite a proper match."

"It is, indeed," echoed Lady Glassington, "as I was saying just now to my Lady Emily. I only hope she may do as well."

"As well, indeed! *I* hope she may do a great deal better; for though this is a mighty fine affair, and is all as it should be for my Lady Frances, it would not do at all for my Lady Emily."

"There now! Why, General, how can you allow her to run on so? Did you ever hear any thing so extraordinary in your life?" asked the again enraged Lady Glassington. "Pray, Mrs. Neville, are Dukes sons and Marquises so very common, and twenty thousand a-year so easily obtained? Your reasons for your extraordinary

declarations; your reasons, I pray; for, with the exception of high blood and ancient nobility, there is not one single thing to wish for more in this marriage."

"Really," said Mrs. Neville, who, though she generally enraged her old friend fifty times in the twenty-four hours, and enjoyed seeing her in a passion, never wished it should go too far—"Really, my dear Lady Glassington, I cannot see why you should be in a passion, because I say, that although Lady Frances is about to make an excellent alliance, I yet hope Lady Emily may make a better."

"Pardon me, Mrs. Neville, that is *not* what you said; but people who talk as fast as you do, never know what they say. —*I* knew what you said: *this* is what you said—'That it was quite a right marriage for my Lady Frances, but would be quite a wrong one for my Lady Emily,'—*that* is what you said, Mrs. Neville." (Here Mrs. Neville raised her hands and eyes.) "Now answer to that point, if you please, Mrs. Neville. It appears to me a very dangerous language to hold forth before a young lady." And here she began to smooth down her lace handkerchief with a quick motion of her hand.

"Well, to be sure, my Lady Glassington is beyond belief! Nothing less exact than the arithmetical table could ever be precise enough for her; but if you insist upon an elaborate explanation of my meaning, this is what I mean—that Lady Frances may find her happiness in her state and wealth, and coronet of strawberry leaves, without requiring any thing beyond them, save a little homage now and then to her beauty; but Lady Emily had better dig a strawberry-bed in her own garden with the man she loves; nay, better follow him in exile and sorrow, so that she has an object to devote all her tenderness to, than possess the world's wealth and all its glittering pageant, without such an object to live for and to look up to:" saying which, she took Lady Emily's arm, and walked away into another room.

"It is a pity," said Lady Glassington, after a moment's pause, in which she looked after her friend with a smile of scorn; and then turning to the General, "It is a pity that Mrs. Neville should have led the strange mixed life of high company, and low company, and much company, and no company, which she has done; for this, together with her eternal reading, has made her a complete oddity, though a good creature in the main; but, General, you never made a worse mistake than when you entrusted Lady Emily to her care.

She is quite an unfit person to introduce a young lady into the world —and so I had the honour of telling you some time ago, my dear General."

"Yes, lady Glassington; and although I was extremely obliged to you for the interest you express about my niece, I ventured to differ with you, because the qualities I particularly value, Mrs. Neville possesses in a very singular degree."

"Pray what are those?"

"Great truth of character, and great simplicity, with a freshness of feeling very uncommon among many persons no longer young, and particularly those who have mixed much in the great world."

"No' a bit," cried Miss Macalpine, coming forward for the first time, though she had kept silence with the utmost difficulty.—"No' a bit, but I think Mistress Neville has spoken wi' infinite discrimination upon this matter; for different folk require different aliment to keep them in health o' body or mind. I mysel' could never hae ta'en up wi' ony ane but the man I lo'ed best.—No! though anither had been rowed in a sheet o' beaten gowd, and *he* without a bawbie."

"What does she say," questioned Lady Glassington?

"Oh! nothing that you could understand, if I were to explain it a hundred times. Never mind; it does not require an answer."

"Well, General,"—rising and shaking her head—"I give you joy, notwithstanding that I see you are as mistaken as usual, and that no good will come to Lady Emily, by your persisting in your mighty injudicious resolve of placing her under the protection of that extraordinary woman, though a very good sort of woman, I allow, yet still"—and she held up her hands and rolled her eyes about—"still, give me leave to say, wholly unsuited to such a trust; for instance, it is only two days ago"—and she smiled triumphantly at having recollected the circumstance—"it is only two days ago that she dined in company with a duchess, a countess, and an ambassadress, and when the ladies were to move to dinner, she absolutely rose up as the steward announced it was upon table, and, laying hold of Lord Mowbray's arm, cried, 'Come! well to be sure, we have waited for it a long time, don't let us stand talking any more;'—and off she marched, before the ambassadress, the duchess, and the countess; then, suddenly recollecting herself, back she came in such a violent hurry, that she almost knocked the ambassadress down in coming in contact with her in the door-way, absolutely brushed off all her rouge, and cried, 'Mercy upon me! I beg your pardon, ladies—I was so hungry I forgot what I was about.'—There! there's for you, General

There's a lady fit to be a chaperon; if that won't do for you, nothing will persuade you of your error.—Give me leave to tell you that."

The General laughed very heartily, and then replied—"My dear Lady Glassington, you must give me leave, at my time of life, to do what I think best for myself and my niece."

"No, indeed, General, that is what I never shall do." This was uttered in a pretence of half banter, but with a decided tone, which spoke for the sincerity of the acrimony with which it was dictated. "So, General Montgomery, I *take* my leave and give you up for evermore. Yes, indeed, I've done with you."

"Good morning, my dear Lady Glassington; I trust we shall meet better friends."

"I've done with you," reiterated the angry lady; and, curtseying very low (for no circumstance could ever make her forget to curtsey), she swept out of the room haughtily, without noticing Miss Macalpine.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Oh! friend, to dazzle, let the vain design;
To raise the thought, and touch the heart be thine;
That charm shall grow, while what fatigues the ring,
Flaunts and goes down, an unregarded thing. POPE.

THREE weeks had elapsed since the General arrived in London. Lady Emily had been taken to all the fashionable places of resort, introduced to many of those who frequented them, and initiated into a great variety of scenes and secrets that saddened and depressed her spirits. Upon the whole, though she was much admired, yet the reality of London delights, viewed through the medium of mere fashionable existence, fell far short of the enchantment in which she had pictured them to herself, or which she had heard her sister describe them to be. The day for Lady Frances's marriage was now fixed. It was shortly to take place; and she was at the height of good humour and complacency—that species of good humour which depends upon the fulfilment of its wishes. She had, indeed, sacrificed some inward feelings; but it was a sacrifice scarce acknowledged to herself; pride, and a spirit of vengeance, made her fancy

herself indifferent. She had obtained her end in being made a great, and what she valued still more, a fashionable personage, and she now condescended to take her sister under her protection.

One day, as she was driving her to Blondell's, the milliner's, the sisters held the following colloquy. "Well, my dear Emily, I am happy to tell you, that upon the whole you have had very fair success. Had you been under my auspices it might have been better; but, take it altogether, you have been extremely admired; and if you will only follow my advice, I doubt not you may yet do very well, as well as myself."

"Oh, that would be difficult!" said Lady Emily, smiling.

"There is Lepel, for instance," continued Lady Frances, "an exceeding good judge, and a very kind good-hearted man, quite the person whose advice one ought to take, because he is intimate with all the young men of the day. Well, he vowed that you would be one of the finest creatures going, if you would only copy a little of my self-possession.—'Why don't you, my dear Lady Frances, (he spoke quite in a confidential manner to me)—'why don't you tell that charming sister of yours not to be always crying at the tragedies and laughing at the comedies, and in such preposterous ecstasies with the Zuchelli and the Rosalinda, just as if she had never been at an opera before in her lifetime, and did not know that people of the world never go into public to be affected by any thing. Really, Lady Emily's beautiful features are quite disfigured sometimes by all those violent commotions. It is very well for the housemaid and one's valet; but, indeed, even they know better now-a-days how to behave themselves. It is only permissible for a lady to suffer the corner of her mouth just to turn, when the irresistible Mr. Liston is on the stage, and she may hold the corner of her pocket-handkerchief to the eye when Madame Pasta acts Medea. But really those sobbings and showerings—and then the laugh, which may be heard in the next box!' But do not look so *ébahi*, Emily—a little time will set all these things to rights. If you were not my sister, and that I should be ashamed of you if you went on so, believe me I would not take the trouble of telling you all this—for I hate a long prose; only this once I give you notice, that positively I cannot go out with you into society, if you continue to attract the attention of well-bred persons by your vulgarisms."

"But how can I help it, Frances, dear? When I am diverted I always laugh, when I am touched, I cry."

"*But you most not be* either the one or the other, my dear, I tell

you; and if you feel that invincible rusticity of emotion so strong upon you, the only recipe I can give to counteract its effect, is to turn from the stage altogether."

"And talk to Captain Lepel, I suppose?—Oh that is enough to make any one grave I grant you; he infects one with his own insipid affectation of indifference."

"I assure you it is much more *comme il faut* to turn about, and flirt with your cavalier, than to sit square, as you do, with your eyes fastened on the scene."

"But I have no cavalier, and I do not exactly know how to set about flirting."

"As to having no cavalier, that, you know, must be your own fault; but it is, I am afraid, Emily, because you have *one*, or rather an imaginary *one*, that you say you have none. Now I am by no means advising you to have *one* only; you should at least have half a dozen, and play them all off the one against the other. To one, you might talk of dogs and horses; to another of perfumed gloves; to another of the Flirtations which you see passing around you: for instance, of my Lady A, and my Lord B;—to another of the comparative merit of opera-dancers; and, if the conversation turns on the beauty of other women, never criticise, for men always set that down to envy; but make some allusion which will excite a comparison with your own charms to your own advantage. For instance, if you have a finely formed head, talk of that as being a beauty in some other woman in whom it is quite the reverse; or a finely turned ancle by the same rule. This draws attention, elicits comparison, obtains a compliment, and induces a sort of concealed understanding, so that a few glancing looks afterwards are sufficient to carry on the war. Thus you see how easy it is to flirt; and without flirtation, you cannot possibly get on in the world. Then, never talk to women when you can help it, only just enough to keep up *les bienséances*—whatever you do, however, remember never to *blesser les bienséances*. But during all conversations, recollect to stop yourself short whenever you begin to grow prosy. Utter only short vague sentences, dropped as if they meant nothing; no disquisitions, no harangues upon taste and fashion; above all, no sentiment, or bookish *étalage*, which every body detests, and no one has time for, even if they had patience.—The great secret of conversation, is to treat it in the manner the French do their cookery, "*Il faut que rien ne domine;*" it should be a sort of touch-and-go, just as a swallow catches a fly, always on the wing;

so that you never find your auditor yawning or leaving you in the midst of a sentence, with, I beg you a thousand pardons, but I see Lady de Luce there, just going away, and I have something to say to her of the utmost consequence; good night!' and there you are *planté là* with your speech half finished."

"But, my dear Frances, where am I to get these half dozen cavaliers that you talk about? I assure you nobody admires me or thinks of speaking to me; and if I had them in attendance, the idea that I must be quite different from what I really am, would strike me dumb. I love dogs and horses, for instance, and can converse about them in my own way by the hour; but then I should not know how to talk of them in the way men talk of them, which very often seems to me very cruel and always very uninteresting; and as to turning my discourse upon the Flirtation, as you call it, of Lady A, and Lord B, why I should die of shame. Then in regard to the merits of the opera-dancers, how can I judge of them who never saw any before?"

"There is something either very obstinate, or very provoking in you, Emily; you are always talking of loving and liking, *vous revenez toujours à vos moutons.* Now that is precisely what you must never do; no well-bred person *talks* about *love.* You must think only appearing to the best advantage, being in the best society, and keeping the reins of fashion in your own hand. Never let one day or rather one night pass without being in the first circles, for out of sight out of mind, and if you attend well to that rule, and take especial care *no day of rest* should intervene, you will soon find that it naturally becomes impossible you should think of any thing else. As to flirting, which seems to shock you so very much, that is only because you attach all sorts of meaning to the word which do not of necessity belong to it, and which people of fashion never intend it should be applied to; that is the fault of your country education."

"Well, but Frances," said Lady Emily, "surely when a woman is married, she has no business to make believe to other men that she is, or may be brought to be, in love with them?"

"In love!—there again; whoever talks about being in love?—In love has positively nothing to do with these arrangements."

"Well, but if a husband sees a wife surrounded by men engaged in discourse with, and whispering to her, and that when he joins the party he seems to be one too many, what does he say? Of course he despises his wife, sends her away, kills his rival, or some

dreadful tragedy ensues; and how could I talk of the flirtations of a married lady if they really do exist, when it leads to such disgraceful, such terrific consequences?"

"Why, Emily, what an incorrigible simpleton you are! Who is talking of murder, and misery, and ruin, and all that sort of Old Bailey stuff? Why such things are never alluded to seriously by people who are well-bred. The most they say on such topics is, 'Dear how shocking! La, how horrid!'—And then somebody makes a good joke of it, to put the disagreeables out of one's head, and it ends in a laugh. Your ideas are quite ridiculous, quite false, I assure you. Before you have spent another season in London, you will learn, that a man of fashion would not endure his wife if nobody else flirted with her. His vanity would have no gratification in such a piece of still life; and I am sure *she* would be dead tired of *him*, if he never flirted with anybody else. In short, to flirt, is the only way to live well together. Why, there is the young Lady B. and her husband, they appear to me to be on the best possible terms. He is quite *aux petits soins* with her, when they do meet, but he is not in the least troublesome to her, or she to him; and they really speak to each other as kindly as possible; but I am sure it is for the very reason that they leave each other at perfect liberty. Besides, it is what every body does."

"And do you mean to do so, Frances?"

"To be sure I do."

"Oh, Heaven forbid, Frances, that you should be serious."

Lady Frances laughed: "And pray let us hear what *you* would do;" said she.

"Live for my husband entirely, devotedly," replied Lady Emily with enthusiasm; "be happy with him abroad, and still happier at home; make my house and myself agreeable to his friends, having no friends myself that were not his likewise; and being so very a part of himself that he could not do without me.—Liking the life he led, whether of gaiety or of seclusion; following his pursuits, or at least endeavouring to be interested in them; thinking of his interests, however much they might interfere with my previous habits and tastes; using my influence to induce him to attend to his public duties, if ever, through indolence or self-indulgence, he was inclined to forget them. In short, finding my own happiness in doing the duty of a wife."

"*Maussade*, enough; and besides, where do you expect to find this phœnix with whom you are to *filer le parfait amour?*—Pre-

pare to be an old maid, Emily for I see no hope of you if you continue to persist in these nonsensical resolutions."

"I should be sorry for that, Frances, too; I know marriage is not a state all sunshine, but I am sure I could keep it free of all storms; and to be an old maid is such a melancholy, lonely idea, that if you please, do not condemn me to it: I never would marry any one I did not esteem and love, and then—"

"Pho! how sick I am of that word love, so perpetually in your mouth; one would think it was meat, drink, and clothing."

"Ay, and so it is, dear sister! and more than all these things put together would be without it."

At this moment, the carriage drove up to the milliner's, and while Lady Frances was standing before a mirror trying on an Opera hat, Lord Bellamont, came in: he had seen her carriage and followed her thither. "Dear me," cried Lady Frances to her sister, "how provoking! here is Lord Bellamont just when I do not want him." At the same time, she put on her most engaging smile when he approached, saying:

"Ah! you are just come to assist me in my decision—shall I take this Berry? or this hat with the drooping feathers?" and she tried them on successively: "which do you think prettiest?" turning to him with a sweet, deferential look.

"Every thing, dearest Frances, that you put on becomes beautiful;" whispered the enamoured Lord Bellamont.

"Nay, now, don't be silly; do decide; do tell me which I shall take."

"Take them both, my love," he whispered; "and this thing," (holding up a train of a magnificent lace dress,) "and what do you call this, Mademoiselle Blondell? it looks very pretty, don't it, Frances? have this, too, and this."

"*Vraiment, Milor a bon goût, on voit bien qu'il s'y connaît, c'est tout ce qu'il y a de plus nouveau.*"

"Put them all up," he added, "and direct them to Lady Frances Lorimer. And, Lady Emily, allow me to offer this slight tribute to your charms," (pointing to a lace dress, as magnificent as the one he had just selected) "do accept it, at least from your sister." Thus, having put his bride into good-humour, he was rewarded by one of her brightest smiles, and she graciously condescended to promise to meet him at the coachmakers, to look at the new carriage he had ordered for her.

The whole morning was spent in driving from one place to an-

other; and when at last Lady Emily found herself in the comparative tranquillity of her own room, she sat down to collect her thoughts from the unsatisfactory hurry of the last hours. She wondered, considering how much variety she had seen of persons and things, that nothing remained to fix her attention upon, or excite one single idea. A mixture of brilliant gewgaws danced before her eyes, and troops of welldressed persons, together with bows, glances, nods of compliment, and shreds of talk; but absolutely not one *idea* was presented to her recollection out of the whole mass. An impression of a sad, unsatisfactory kind was the general result of the retrospection of her visit to London; and she sighed to think how differently she had pictured it to herself from what she had found it to be in reality.

Miss Macalpine entered the room while she was absorbed in such melancholy musings. This kind-hearted, but abrupt and simple-minded woman, had penetration enough to discover that Emily's heart had wandered away from her own keeping—that her happiness was no longer in her own power; but she had not sufficient *tact* or refinement to treat the subject delicately, and she often wounded when she meant to heal. "Well, Lady Emily, and what'n braw things hae ye been feasting your eyes upo' the day? I daure to say, now, yere wishing ye were Lady Frances, or rather it's more like your ain sel to be thinking o' ane that's no here. It's unco queer-like, that Lord Mowbray should be awa to his castle in Dorsetshire."

Lady Emily started: "To Dorsetshire!" and turned pale as she added, "then we shall probably never see him again."

"Hoot! what's the lassie thinking about; ye'll see him often eneuch, I'se warrant. It's lang ere the diel dies at the dike side—no that I would na wish that you should just be setting yere fancy on a chiel that's no to ride the water on, I'm feared."

"What puts it into your head, my dear Alpinia, that I have set my fancy upon him, as you call it?"

"I may be wrang; it's no sae easy to say, forby that it may be ye dinna weel ken what ye would be at yoursel; but I'm thinking ye forgathered owr muckle wi him at the Ha', no to be unco taen up wi him, that's for certain."

"I wonder, dear Alpinia, you allow so many fancies to enter your brain; but at all events, you know we are going into retirement for ever, and therefore there is little chance of our meeting him again. As soon as Frances's marriage is over, we take our departure for

Somersetshire; and my poor uncle's affairs are, I fear, hopeless"—(her eyes filled with tears as she spoke). "You know it is not the loss of the fortune I lament, Alpinia; it is to see my uncle's spirit broken down, and sinking beneath the insolence of that purse-proud Duke of Godolphin. But how do you know, Alpinia, that Lord Mowbray is gone from town?"

"By a written line o' his ain haund;—here it is," and feeling in her pocket she produced the note which was as follows.

"My dear Miss Macalpine, some unexpected business calls me to Mowbray Castle. If I should not be able to pay my respects to the General before my departure, I beg you to make my compliments and regrets at not seeing him to take my leave, acceptable to himself and to Lady Emily, &c. &c. "MOWBRAY."

"So he is gone!" said Lady Emily, looking paler than before; "and I have never seen him since the night of the Opera, soon after we came to town!"

Miss Macalpine shook her head. "Woes me, but I fear there's something no just right in that young Lord. I canna tell what na thing it is ails him, but yon Rosalinda and he seem to hae been acquaint lang since syne, and thae Italians are no canny—fearfu' like bodies; whan they get a grip o' a man they never let go. Ye suld na be thinking o' him, Lady Emily; for every time I hae remarked him weel whan ony body has spoken o' that Rosalinda, a kind o' cauld sweat, like the dead thraw, has stood on his brow, and that's a sure sign there's something wrang. Dinna let him wile the heart out o' your breast—remember there's as gude fish in the sea as ever came out o't, and my advice till ye is, no to fash mair about him."

"I! dear Alpinia, not I—what right have I to think about him? he never thought of me."

"Oh, for the matter of that, as the auld song says—

'Luve will venture in whar it daure na weel be seen,
Luve will venture in whar reason ance has been.'

And then, that same Luve will not give place to reason' sel'. Ance in, it's no' so easy to drive him awa'—it's a waur job, may be nor ye think o', my puir lassie"—and Miss Macalpine sighed a heart's sigh. "Now take my counsel; don't be letting the canker o' care feed on your heart's core—your cheeks are no' the rosy cheeks they used to be; and the sparkle is out o' your ee, and—"

"Now, do not be fancying all sorts of things, Alpinia, that are not true; how can any body look well in the hurry of a London

life? and besides, should I not be more hard-hearted than a stone if I could see my dear uncle turned out of his home—the home he loves so well, to be a wanderer, a sort of outcast, and not feel for him."

"That's true; my vera heart's sore, thinking o't. Oh! if he could only come and stay a while wi' me at Heatherden! it would be a proud day to me to see him there."

"Under other circumstances, I doubt not my uncle would be delighted to become your guest; but when the heart is crushed, and the prospects of life darkened as his are, there is nothing but an independent situation, however humble, which can afford repose or refuge to a noble mind."

"And you, Lady Emily, are determined, I hear, not to accept Lady Frances's invitation, though she really wishes to have ye."

"What, and leave my uncle? how could you suppose such a thing?"

"I never did enterteen sic na thought: I knew well eneugh that ye would never forsake him."

"There, Alpinia, you did me but justice; besides, I have no merit in this determination, for I love nobody so much; at least"—(and she blushed and hesitated, for, to the shadow of a shade, Lady Emily always spoke the truth)—"at least I love no one *better*, nor can I ever—in *another way*, perhaps, but in no way with more true devotion of heart and soul."

Here a note arrived:—"From Mrs. Neville," said Lady Emily, opening, and reading it. "She wants me to go to Lady Orwell's this evening, but I shall not accept her proposal; for to-morrow is the grand fête which Prince Levenstein gives at Roehampton, which I own I should like to see, as it is the first thing of the kind, and may perhaps be the last at which I shall ever be present; so I would not leave my uncle for two nights together. I shall say nothing, therefore, to him about it, else he will order me to go, and get Lady Glassington to come and make up his card-party."

"That's weel thought; but are ye sure ye would na go if I could get ony ane to tak your place at the card-table."

"No, Alpinia, I assure you I am very anxious to keep my own place there; it is delightful to be necessary to the amusements of those we love."

This matter arranged, they separated till dinner, and in the evening, notwithstanding Lady Glassington's fury that morning, she could not withstand an invitation to make up the General's table,

and accordingly obeyed the summons. "This is really like you, my dear lady," said the General, going to the door to meet her: "you do not retain any rancour against me, and I make no doubt I was in the wrong, since you found fault with me."

"Ah," said Lady Glassington, with a smile of allusion to recollected love: "there was a time when you and I might have found it a dangerous thing to quarrel and make it up again. But now, the sooner we agree after a little angry discussion the better, for we know not how long we may be alive to quarrel."

This little bit of sentiment quite softened the General's tender heart, and there was something like a renovation of their ancient innocent Flirtation established between them for the rest of the evening.

Just as the cards were cut, and Miss Macalpine and Lady Emily were settled as partners, a servant announced that Mademoiselle Blondell had brought home Lady Emily's new dress, and wished her Ladyship to try it on, in case any alterations should be necessary; for she was afraid if she did not receive her orders that night, she could not possibly call the next day; having so much to do, she should be obliged to disappoint a great many ladies. "Oh!" said Lady Glassington, laying down her cards, "by all means go, my Lady Emily—General, order her to go, and try on her dress, and we shall see how she looks in it."

"Dear Lady Glassington, I assure you, I am not the least anxious about the matter. Do not, I pray you, disturb your game for me. I never tried on a gown in my life; it will do vastly well, I have not the least doubt of it; let it take its chance, pray." (To the servant.) "Tell Mademoiselle Blondell 'tis all right."

"No, no, my love! Lady Glassington is so good as to excuse you, and you *shall* go."

"For ony sake, Lady Emily, dinna leave it to the last moment, and then may be find ye canna wear it," cried Miss Macalpine, who dearly loved to feast her eyes on finery.

"Very well, then, I will not detain you a moment," and away flew Lady Emily.

"Emily, Emily," cried the General, "remember to come and show yourself to us."

A brief quarter of an hour sufficed to Lady Emily; and when she returned, the whole party were struck with the extreme splendour and beauty of her and her attire, which seemed to confer mutual lustre upon each other. "Really," cried Lady Glassington, "it is

a vastly handsome dress, a magnificent dress—there now, don't stoop; hold up your head whatever you do; a lady never looks so well as when she maintains an upright position of the head; remember first to turn your chin over one shoulder, then over the other, drawing yourself well up at the same time, and stepping back a pace or two, thus: while, at the same time, you play off your fan, thus:" and Lady Glassington showed her a receipt for practising the graces.

"Vastly well, my Lady Glassington, vastly well, nobody had a finer carriage than you. Emily, you cannot do better than take a leaf out of her Ladyship's book on the Graces—" Suddenly the door opened, and in came Mrs. Neville, leaning on Lord Mowbray's arm. Lady Emily's astonishment, pleasure, and even emotion at the sight of one she fancied two hundred miles off, lent a new heightening to her beauty, and she stood silent.

Mrs. Neville ran on as usual: "Well, now, isn't it charming, charming! here you are ready-dressed: come along with us, Emily, to Lady Orwell's. Well, to be sure, it was the luckiest thing in the world how I came to think of calling here, after having received your apology; but my Lord Mowbray happened to drop in, and I thought Lady Orwell would be so delighted if I could only take her such a smart cavalier.—For a wonder, he consented, and so I brought him away in my carriage; but I do not think I should have caught him, if I had not been coming here first. And now that you are ready, Lady Emily, why should you not go too? It will ensure me the entrée at Lady Orwell's for evermore, if I can carry two such stars along with me!" During this speech, Miss Macalpine was holding a private discourse with Lord Mowbray. "Come along, my Lord; Miss Macalpine, do not detain him—make haste, there's no time to be lost."

But here a loud knock announced another visitor; and while they were forming conjectures who it could be, Lady Frances made her appearance. After having paid her compliments to the company, she uttered an exclamation of surprise, on seeing Lady Emily. "What an exhibition!" she exclaimed; "so you would not go to Lady Orwell's to-night;" and she glanced her eyes significantly from Lord Mowbray to her sister's attire—"so that is the reason,—oh, oh!"

"No, indeed, Frances," Lady Emily replied, whispering and blushing, "you are quite mistaken; nothing made me decline going to Lady Orwell's; but not liking to leave my uncle without his party."

"Well, Emily, we will not dispute about the matter; but at least I will do you the justice to say, that for once you have got a very beautiful gown, and are really well dressed, thanks to Mademoiselle Blondell. Truly, it is quite beautiful:" and she examined it all over. "Is she not perfectly well dressed, my Lord Mowbray?"

"Well dressed!—yes, perhaps so; I don't know, upon my honour; but if you ask me how Lady Emily looks, I think she is just as handsome when she has less finery on."

"Oh, but you know there is a time for all things. One is not always to be *en robe de chambre*."

"I think," said Lord Bellamont, "that ladies disfigure themselves very much by all their millinery contrivances; and if they would only adopt some sort of dress more analogous to the human form, and keep to that, they would look much handsomer. The less of contrivance, and quirks, and puffings, and plaitings, and gimpings, and little ins and outs the better. Something large, flowing, of fine material if you will, only none of your contrivances. Look less at milliner's shops, and more at pictures; but nothing can ever look well, so long as women paint their faces."

"Oh, dear! you must go back and be born over again, and live in the times of the Greeks and Romans; though I think my governess told me, the Roman ladies used the same aids to heighten their charms. As to me, I am quite contented with the things as they are. But how comes it, my Lord Mowbray, that you are still in London?" continued Lady Frances. "I thought you were gone; at least, you told me some nights ago that you were going to Mowbray Castle?"

"But going and gone are two things, Lady Frances. Business detained me to-night; still I intend going to-morrow."

"Are you resolved?"

"Resolved is a great word for such a trifling circumstance:—I *intend* to do so."

"By-the-by, Emily," said Lady Frances, addressing her sister, "I wish to speak with you; for to-morrow I may not see you till we meet at the ball," and she led her sister into an adjoining room.

"Sister dear," said she in her sweetest tones, "I have a favour to ask of you."

"I am rejoiced, Frances, to hear it; for you well know, that if in my power to grant, it shall be complied with."

"Well," rejoined Lady Frances, "to tell you the truth, I have just been trying on my gown for to-morrow's ball, and it does not please me—it is all white, and with my black hair it looks quite like a magpie. Do, there's a good girl, do change dresses with me: your fair hair and light blue eyes, will suit the angel pretension of all white; but it does not answer to me, that is certain. In short, if you will but grant my request, I will do any thing for you afterwards. You know Lord Mowbray has seen you in this, and you do not want to get up any *new* Flirtations; therefore one gown is the same to you as another."

Lady Emily smiled as she replied—"No, Frances, one gown is not the same to me as another. I do not pretend *that*, for every body likes to look their best, especially on an occasion of so much show and ceremony as that of to-morrow; but I shall, with pleasure, give you up mine, if it makes you happier."

"Well now, Emily dear, that is very kind. When I am married, I hope I shall be able to do as much for you. So now ring the bell, and order Mademoiselle Blondell to take your dress to my house, and bring mine here."

The order was given; and Lady Emily, having disrobed herself of her pink and silver, made a ready sacrifice of it to her sister, and in a few minutes more returned with her to join the rest of the party clad in her usual simple array. "My Lady Glassington," cried Mrs. Neville, "of course we shall see you to-morrow at the Prince's ball."

"Mrs. Neville, there is no *of course* at all in the business; or else it is true, you *ought* to have seen me there; but every thing is *out of course* now-a-days."—Then settling her petticoat with one hand, and laying hold of Mrs. Neville with the other—"Now do, there's a kind person—do lay aside your useless hurry for once, and sit down while I tell you a story."

"My Lady Glassington is quite in her zephyr mood," whispered the General to Lady Emily.

"General, I say, General! do listen now to what I am going to say to you."

"I am all attention," he replied, looking very serious.

"As I sat in my *peignoir* while Marshall was adjusting my head-dress, he said; 'Your ladyship, will, I conclude, want my attendance, for the Prince's ball to-morrow night.' 'And pray Mr. Marshall, what, makes you conclude any thing about the matter?' —'I beg your Ladyship's pardon,' said he, 'only I thought, I ima-

gined—that his Serene Highness would not give an entertainment to the whole Court in which your Ladyship was not included, and besides, I know from pretty good authority, that tag, rag, and bobtail will be there to-morrow night.'—'But I would have you to know, Mr. Marshall, once for all,' (and she arose and extended her arm theatrically)—'that my Lady Glassington is neither tag, rag, nor bobtail.'—Now, Mistress Neville, are *you* answered?"

"Bravo! my Lady," was uttered on all sides.

"Why yes," she said; "I think I have done for Marshall, and posed Mrs. Neville, and that is saying a good deal."

"Well, to be sure! charming, charming, it is beyond belief: the best thing I ever heard in my life! I shall go and tell it at Lady Orwell's.—Excellently good! 'I am neither tag, rag, nor bobtail!' Well, to be sure,—but I must be gone, so good-night, General, good-night, my Lady Glassington, never mind, my Lord;" and shutting the door in his face as Lord Mowbray rose to hand her to her carriage, she left Lady Glassington in undisputed possession of the field to say of her whatever she chose.

After a decent pretence of interest in her uncle's health, Lady Frances took her departure also, and Lord Mowbray making a fifth in the coterie, was requested to cut in at the card-table. "If you will give me leave," he replied, "I had much rather take up a book and occasionally look on."—Accordingly, he established himself behind Lady Emily's chair, and opposite to a long mirror which reflected her profile. On this, his eyes were much oftener fixed than on his book; and though the General several times apologised for his rudeness in going on with his game while his Lordship had nothing to entertain him, the latter assured him in all sincerity, that he did not wish to be more agreeably employed: several times, indeed, his reverie was interrupted by Miss Macalpine's crying out—"There now the lassie's clean daft: why, was na that the best spade? yere aff at the nail, I think; wha but your ain sel' would ha'e thought o' trumping the best spade."

These reproaches Lady Emily bore very meekly, for she felt that the cards were dancing before her eyes in gay confusion. At length fortune being herself blind, favoured the blind, and Miss Macalpine having now a bumper rubber, considered that all was right, and forgave the hair-breadth escapes and desperate risks which Lady Emily's heedlessness had caused her to encounter.

After the card-party broke up, Lady Glassington and the General got upon *old topics; and, in* talking of many a departed friend or ac-

quaintance, they went over their juvenile years again, and forgot the passing hours. Miss Macalpine, Lord Mowbray, and Lady Emily sat apart from them, forming their own amusement. Lord Mowbray seemed much entertained by Lady Emily's descriptions of all she had seen, and he ended by asking her whether she preferred the town or the country. "I should like," she replied, "always to spend a portion of the year in town, but the greatest part of it in the country. If I must choose the one or the other for ever—oh certainly then, the country; but neither in town nor in the country would I live exactly as I see any body live."

"How so, Lady Emily?"

"Why I would not, because I was in London, determine never to pass an evening at home with my family; neither would I in the country be for ever without society; a large house in the country filled with pleasant people would be delightful."

"Hech, sirs!" said Miss Macalpine, shaking her head, "my Lady Emily, you 're no' for a puir man's wife—that's certain; though I thought otherwise ance; but no' a bit o't; dinna ye ken that there's nathing sae wasterfu' as to keep open doors in a country house, feeding the piper's maws, we Laddie, although doubtless, in the Highlands, nae body ever shuts them, but then ye see it's unco different like from the ways o' England. Here, gin ye're asked to a neebur's it's no' expected ye should stay mair than ane night at ony haund; and three or four days at the vera best, is a' ye can reckon on: even frae friends indeed, that same, it's like eneugh, will produce glied faces wi' mony a sly hint that ye had better no' stay langer. Hospitality is na the growth o' this cuntrie; 'tis a shining, and appearing, and striving to get the taye ane afore the ither; and if, my Lady Emily, ye will choose to combine the General's Scotch ways, wi' the cauld ceremonious grandeur o' the southerns, ye maun keep a sharp luke out, and get a hantle siller to keep yer head abune water. But is no' for a' that, that I'm blaming you; on the contrair, it pits me in mind ye ha'e a gude drap o' mountain blood in your veins, and I like you a' the better. It's but natral too that ye suld tak' pleasure in the fine balls and grand doings that are going on here, and I am surprised, now there's a prospect o' sae mony o' thae things taking place, that you, my Lord, should be just gawing awa'."

"I have nothing to do with balls and fêtes, my dear Miss Macalpine. These things are only fit for young men."

"Why, to hear ye talk, one might suppose ye were the age of Methusaleh at the vera least."

"And so I am; age and youth are not designated by years alone, but depend on a thousand circumstances, which wither the one or nourish the other. For instance, look at General Montgomery, who ever feels that he is old?"

"Oh!" said Lady Emily, with an expression of anxious concern, "do you not see a great change in my uncle ever since that fatal story at the Hall. Since we have left that dear place, he has never been himself."

"What fatal story? do tell it me," said Lord Mowbray; "for, though a vague report has reached me, I never heard it related distinctly."

"Oh! you remember I began to tell it you at the Opera, just as Rosalinda came on the stage, and I stopped to look at her, when, on turning again round to speak to you, you were gone, and I have never since that moment see you."

These words were common words; but there was that in the tone and manner in which they were pronounced which spoke volumes to Lord Mowbray. He looked in Lady Emily's face earnestly, her eyes fell beneath his gaze; and she was painfully conscious that her colour went and came, betraying the emotion which his scrutiny excited. All farther conversation was put an end to by Lady Glassington rising to depart; but how much may a mere glance leave on the mind to be reflected and commented upon!

CHAPTER XIX.

To me more dear, congenial to my heart,
One native charm, than all the gloss of art;
Spontaneous joys, where nature has its play,
The soul adopts, and own their free-born sway;
Lightly they frolic o'er the vacant mind,
Unenvied, unmolested, unconfined.
But the long pomp, the midnight masquerade,
With all the freaks of wanton wealth array'd,
In these, ere triflers half their wish obtain
The toiling pleasure sickens into pain;
And e'en while fashion's brightest arts decoy,
The heart, distrusting, asks if this be joy? GOLDSMITH.

THE next morning, when Lady Emily prepared to rise, a beautiful bouquet was brought to her bed-side. "Oh the dear delicious

flowers," she said, inhaling their fragrance; "who can have made me this charming and most welcome present? who brought it?" calling her maid.

"A little boy, your Ladyship."

"Are you sure it is for me?"

"The boy said so, my Lady; besides, there is a card that you have not observed tied to the stalks."

Lady Emily looked at it. In a very illegible hand was written "For Lady Emily Lorimer." "I cannot imagine who should so far have consulted my tastes," she said, but her heart throbbed at the secret thought that it might be Lord Mowbray. It is necessary to be a woman, and a woman in love, and, moreover, a woman in love with flowers, to know all the witchery which resides in them. The full force of all these things was confessed by Lady Emily; and when the hour arrived at which she was to prepare for the ball, at Roehampton, she had recourse to these simple ornaments as her only decoration. The gown her sister had sent her in exchange for her own, could not compare with it in beauty or magnificence; but in its rich materials and perfect simplicity, there was a grace not less distinguished, than had it been covered with ornaments.

The General, however, when he looked at her with delighted eyes, demanded the reason why she had discarded her dress of the preceding evening; and she was obliged to relate the circumstance which had induced her to resign it. How the knowledge of this enhanced her loveliness in the General's estimation! and with what affectionate warmth he pressed her to his heart, and blessed her, as he said, "Go, my precious girl! go, and in all the reflected beauty of your soul shining through your person; go, and enjoy the innocent triumph which awaits you. I grieve that I cannot accompany you; but, circumstanced as I am, you will understand, my Emily, that it is impossible."

"It is a bitter disappointment to me that it should be so, but I only wish you to do whatever you feel to be best. Good, good-night, dear uncle; good-night, Alpinia."

Mrs. Neville was punctual to a moment, and away they drove; but the impatience of the latter made her stop the carriage many times before they reached Hyde Park Corner, to know what o'clock it was, lest, as she said, they should be too late.

They arrived, however, in good time, and entered the grounds by a gate which was metamorphosed into a triumphal arch, most brilliantly illuminated and decorated with various devices. The

lamps, the flowers, the train of servants in rich liveries, the crowds of guests in fancy costumes, formed a splendid scene.

The ball-room had been erected in the gardens, and was blazing with lights, and gay with a profusion of ornaments in the best taste. On entering, Lady Emily distinguished Lord Mowbray leaning against one of the pillars.

The moment he perceived her, with an eagerness of manner wholly unlike his usual demeanour, he came towards her: and, on Mrs. Neville's expressing her surprise at his being still in town, he said—"Business called me away, but pleasure detained me."

"Well, to be sure, that is charming—so you really tell the truth *at last;* but I never believed you when you said you were going; it is beyond belief how I can read characters; it is vastly diverting, vastly charming, quite charming, I assure you."

"You are an alarming person then, Mrs. Neville, to be intimate with; I shall take care in future how I venture to lay myself open to your animadversions."

"What, have you any deadly secrets, then?—Well, to be sure, I was always afraid there was some mystery or another about you. Now, to tell the truth, I don't like mysteries, except in story books, and even in them I always look at the last page first. Don't you think that's charming. Well, to be sure, I would always advise every body to do that in real life—turn to the last leaf of your story, provide for that, and all will be well. Ah! who do I see there?—Mr. Altamont, I vow! How do you do, my dear Mr. Altamont? Don't you agree with me in what I was saying just now?"

"Most entirely, my dear Madam, I really thought I was talking myself."

"Well, charming, charming! that is beyond belief; but I must present you to my young friend, Lady Emily Lorimer—you will like one another, I can answer for that."

A regular introduction took place, and Mr. Altamont of course joined their party. During the whole of Mrs. Neville's evolutions, Lord Mowbray attended Lady Emily's footsteps; and when, about midnight, a summons was given to the company to view the fire-works, he offered her the assistance of his arm to conduct her through the gardens. There is something so sociable in the acceptance of an arm—it facilitates conversation—it is, for the time being, an interchange of kindness—a tender of service from the *one party, and an implied* trust on the other, which is gratify-

ing to both. In the present instance, however, it did not seem productive of much ease of intercourse: neither Lady Emily nor Lord Mowbray spoke; while, on the contrary, Mr. Altamont and Mrs. Neville never ceased talking. "Come," said the former, turning to Lord Mowbray, "you seem so very silent, that I think you must be tired of your post, however extraordinary it appears that such should be the case;—so let us change partners awhile. You will keep Mrs. Neville in order. She is a great deal too lively for me; and I will venture to say, I will make Lady Emily laugh. Come, Lord Mowbray, do not be such a monopoliser. Lady Emily, do me the honour," and he extended his arm to her.

"You forget, my dear Altamont, that Lady Emily might be the death of one of us, if she were to decide in favour of either. I am not sure that even your cloth would protect you; no, no, dull as I may be, Lady Emily has accepted my arm, and it must be only at her especial desire that I can relinquish the honour she has conferred."

Mr. Altamont bowed, saying jocosely, "Oh, oh! is it so?" then, blowing his fingers, added, "burnt children dread the fire—I shall know better another time how to address your Lordship." And he whispered to Mrs. Neville, "This begins to look serious. But pray, my dear Madam, tell me since when has this hot flame been kindled?"

"Well, to be sure, it is beyond belief if it *is* kindled, for I declare I never heard of it; well, charming, charming! I vow and declare, there is nothing I should like better! She is a delightful creature, thoroughly good, that I can answer for—none of your flimsy fashionable dolls! With all the graces of refinement, she combines the every-day substantial qualities of head and heart within and without."

"And be she what she may," observed Mr. Altamont, "Lord Mowbray is worthy of her."

"*He!*—Oh—I don't know what he is!—so strange, so unequal, so mysterious! I told him just now I hated mysteries; straight forward for me—well, to be sure, more mischief is done by your mysterious folks, than by any other set that go about. Do you know I have fancied there is something between him and the Rosalinda which may prevent his being a marrying man; and I'd tear his eyes out, if I thought he intended to make that sweet girl Lady Emily unhappy. It is beyond belief, how I could hate him if I thought that were possible."

"It is quite impossible, my dear Mrs. Neville, I am sure he never intended to make any thing, much less any body, unhappy in his life."

"May be so; but intentions are one thing, and actions are another."

"Humph!" said Mr. Altamont, as if overcome with the heat and pressure of the crowd.

At that moment, they came up to Lady Frances, who was leaning on Lord Bellamont's arm, but turning her head and talking to a number of young men over her opposite shoulder. Her dress was splendid and glittering among the lights, and she herself was radiant in beauty. "Bless me!" cried Mrs. Neville, seizing hold of her petticoat, "what have you got here? borrowed plumes, borrowed plumes! Well, to be sure, it is beyond belief; so you wheedled Lady Emily out of her beautiful dress—the more shame for you; I never missed it from her, she is so lovely without it; but now I see it upon you, I remember all about it."

"Come away," whispered Lady Frances to Lord Bellamont, "let us avoid this horrible vulgar woman; I have steered clear of her hitherto."

"How very unlucky! but now I fear it is impossible," replied Lord Bellamont, "and there is the signal-rocket."

Lady Emily now came forward, and her sister could not avoid standing close by her, although she would gladly have evaded the neighbourhood. "Really, Emily," said she at length, "you look vastly well; you cannot think how that white dress becomes you; does she not, my Lord?" turning to Lord Bellamont.

The latter sighed, as he replied: "Lady Emily is secure of one great point towards the perfection of all beauty, namely, the unconsciousness she evinces to her own charms."

"I am afraid I am as vain as most people," said Lady Emily, laughing; "it is only because you do not know me thoroughly, that you invest me with so much undeserved humility."

"Bless me!" rejoined Lady Frances, with ill disguised pettishness, "what a pity it is that you two are not to be linked together in the holy bands instead of myself; I protest you are better suited to each other; the one so complimentary and proper, the other so diffident and sincere."

Lord Bellamont whispered something in her ear and looked distressed; at this moment the fireworks began. They were of the most magnificent description known in this country, and the exclamations usually uttered on such occasions, expressive of admiration or amusement, were reiterated by the spectators. Lady Emily was

unfeignedly delighted; and, as she beheld the drops of liquid fire which fell like brilliants in the clear æther, and vanished in their birth, she said, addressing herself to Lord Mowbray, "Why cannot such bright visions be arrested? they do but mock the sight with their brief enchantment."

"Is it not so with all that is fairest, all that is dearest, upon earth?" asked Lord Mowbray, as he gazed earnestly on her countenance, while the blaze illuminated her features.

"I hope not," she replied, "I believe not. What is fairest and best here lives hereafter."

"Matter for an homily," interrupted Mr. Altamont, who overheard this conversation; "if all young ladies discoursed thus, one might endure to listen to them."

Lady Emily laughed, and hoped they should be better acquainted, and that he would yet listen to her very often. "Do you know," he said, "I feel as if I had been acquainted with you all my life; every now and then one does meet with persons whom one certainly has been living with all one's life-time, only without knowing it, till suddenly one's eyes are opened to their recognition, and there they are. Is not that mighty good nonsense, Lady Emily? at least does it not convey to you, figuratively, the sort of feeling I mean to describe?"

"Oh, perfectly!" she said, smiling; "and it has opened whole volumes of you, and your identity to me, more than any regular drawn plan of your character could have done."

"Well, let us forthwith, fair lady, swear eternal friendship. I would be your true knight evermore, were I not already engaged; but as it is, I may be your true friend, and I will; so that matter is settled."

Another burst of fire-works prevented farther conversation. "Was it not a splendid display?" said Mrs. Neville, the moment it ended.—"Well, to be sure, I never saw any thing of the kind finer; hunch, hunch! it is beyond belief; but Lady Frances, I say,—no, no! you shall not escape me so either—let me look at you—so you really have got Lady Emily's gown? Well, it was vastly amiable in her to give it you—I do not think I should have been so soft, though. I hope you are very much obliged to her; to be sure, it is beyond belief: well! it does not much signify to her, that is one thing, for she is exactly one of those few persons who do not depend on dress. The less she appears as though she came out of the hands of a milliner the better; more than most folks can say—not even of the

young and handsome—eh, Mr. Altamont?—I say, Mr. Altamont—Mrs. Fitzhammond, Miss Frisby, do stop a moment, if you please; only listen,—here is my Lady Frances, who has persuaded Lady Emily,—listen to my story, if you please;—well, to be sure, it is beyond belief, but quite true, nevertheless; here is my Lady Frances, the bride elect, who has persuaded my Lady Emily to give her this splendid dress and to take up with hers instead; did you ever hear of any thing so goodnatured on Lady Emily's part?—and, except by an accident, it would never have come to my knowledge; for I do not think Lady Frances would have told it, and I am sure Lady Emily would not. However, I conceive it to be a great pity that such a story should *not* be known, so I call on you all to listen to my words."

Lady Frances, during this running fire of Mrs. Neville's tongue, was endeavouring to get away, and affected not to hear her; but the crowd prevented her progress, and she was under the necessity of hearing that lady's comments. The person on whom it made the deepest effect was Lord Mowbray: he treasured it in his heart of hearts.

The company now dispersed in the gardens, which were illuminated, and a singularly fine night in July invited them to enjoy the beauty of the place. The effect of the illuminations among the trees and flowers was like some fairy revel.

"Look at the clear transparency of this emerald light," said Lady Emily. "One might fancy one saw the very juices of the leaves playing through their delicate fibres: and look! there again, in those parts of the foliage where the shadow falls, how dense, and almost awful. So mysterious, and yet, too, like a thing of life! for the waving of the boughs makes the gloom seem peopled with shadowy tribes."

"I wish my fancy were as fresh as yours, Lady Emily," replied Lord Mowbray; "but at all events pray speak on, it does me good to hear you."

"It does you good!" replied Lady Emily laughing; "I am sure I am glad of it. I did not know that my chatter could do any body good, except my dear uncle. Oh! how I wish he were here with us. If he were here, I should be perfectly happy. He and I have often admired the glowworms beaming on his favourite south terrace; and perhaps this would remind him of that loved scene; but this is indeed far more splendid—yet perhaps there is something more delightful, after all, in the natural lamp of the inhabitant of the woods.

There is, in the reality of Nature, a charm of which one never wearies."

"Oh, trust me!" ejaculated Lord Mowbray, gently pressing her arm to his heart; "I am convinced it would be impossible ever to weary in your society, or ever to be happy were I for ever banished thence."

Lady Emily was silent; but the accelerated pulsations of her heart, the tremor of pleasure that ran along every fibre of her frame, was not wholly unknown even to Lord Mowbray. Something there is of magical in such concords of the soul, like a glass which vibrates to the unison of another, although it is untouched by mortal hand.

After a moment's silent and mutual rapture, Lady Emily broke the sweet spell, by saying; "I have heard much of the fire-flies in southern climates: are they not very beautiful? even more so than our own glowworms?"

Lord Mowbray suddenly dropped her arm, and, with a convulsive expression of mental pain, replied—"It is impossible for me to answer you."

"And yet my question is a very simple one."

"Yes—But——"

At that moment they came to a walk hardly lighted; and the sound of their own names, pronounced with certain adjuncts attached to them, made them instinctively silent. As they advanced, they found these persons were not as they had supposed them to be for some time before—Mrs. Neville, Mr. Altamont, and their party; but Lord Mowbray immediately recognized the female voice which now spoke, to be that of Mrs. Dormer. "Every body," she said,—"every body is astonished that the Duke of Godolphin should consent to his son's marriage with Lady Emily Lorimer, after the dreadful suspicion that attaches to General Montgomery. It is said, that on account of his great services in his younger days, the matter is hushed up, but every one believes, notwithstanding, that he was the murderer."

"Dreadful!—But is there any proof of the fact?"

"The circumstances were so distinctly related, and so accurately known by the whole household," resumed the first speaker, "as scarcely indeed to leave a shadow of doubt on the minds of any one. What his motive could be, no person, it is true, can possibly guess; *that* remains a mystery. It may be, that the poor old gentleman *was frightened*, and so shot the man who probably came to extract

a little money from him; but whatever was *the motive*, such is the *fact*, depend on that."

"But does Lord Mowbray know this story?" said another voice, —"surely he ought to be informed of it; for they say he is actually taken in by that busy body, Mrs. Neville, and an old vulgar cunning Scotch cousin, to have serious thoughts of the other girl."

"Oh, I cannot give credit to that report," said the other person; "for she is half a fool. Even her own sister, Lady Frances, allows it to be the case; nevertheless, it is astonishing how men are wheedled into scrapes by those sort of would-be innocents."

"Ah! all very true; well, my friend Mowbray," continued Mr. Beverley, for he was the confidant of Mrs. Dormer; "my friend Mowbray is too good a fellow to be entrapped by such an artful set. You remember, at Naples, how clearly I got him out of that scrape with the Rosalinda; I will do the same on the present occasion, never fear: it will be fine sport."

Lord Mowbray, who had felt Lady Emily's tottering footsteps sinking under her, as she clung to his arm, and leant on him for support, during this conversation, retained sufficient presence of mind, at its close, to entreat her to repose for a moment on a bench which was just at hand; she suffered him to lead her to it. "Malicious and contemptible liars!" he said, seating himself by her, and taking her passive hand; "I entreat you, dear Lady Emily, think not that what we have just heard respecting that part of the discourse which interests you, can for a moment be harboured in my mind—and for the rest, it can be no longer delayed. I must decide my fate; suffer me to explain to you what may seem mysterious respecting myself; but yet this is not the time or place. Allow me to request an interview with you at your own house; I earnestly implore it."

"I feel sick at heart," replied Lady Emily; "I scarcely know where I am—every thing seems to me to be turning round; take me, oh, take me to Mrs. Neville; let me go hence," she added, rising, "I am quite able to walk, let me go hence, I cannot stay longer here, indeed I cannot."

And she rose and moved forward, heedless of every one that opposed her passage, till she was once more in a blaze of light. Many of the company animadverted upon her hurried step and strange wildness of manner; and in vain Lord Mowbray whispered to her to compose herself. She seemed reckless of all the passing scene. At length the well-known sounds of Mrs. Neville gave fresh speed

to her flight "Well, to be sure, where can they be? It is beyond belief; I have lost them, quite lost them, hunch! hunch! Well, charming! they are gone." But Lady Emily flew forward, and in a moment caught Mrs. Neville's arm.

"There she is," said Mr. Altamont, "quite safe, I'll answer for it. Why, in this famed labyrinth, who can expect *not* to be lost? what does one come into a labyrinth for, but to lose one's way? But when there is a Theseus to deliver one out of the maze, one need not be alarmed."

"Yes, but I am though, exceedingly alarmed, hunch! hunch! It is beyond belief how ill you look, Lady Emily; well, to be sure, you are as pale as death; charming, charming!"

"I am not well, in truth, dear Mrs. Neville, a sudden dizziness, a faintness has come over me. I was obliged to sit down for some time, and even now I am very little better; if you please, we will go home directly."

"Pho! pho! child, you are only tired to death, hanging about here. Come into the circle—bless me! it would be beyond belief if we were to go away so soon. I am sure you will be quite recovered when you come into the house and take some refreshment." So saying, she hurried her along.

"Why, in the name of wonder, Lord Mowbray, what have you done with Lady Emily?" asked Mr. Altamont, in a low tone of voice.

"I have done nothing; but some vile mischievous tongues have been busy with their poison, and unfortunately it has come to Lady Emily's ears, and has sadly agitated her. But do not ask me any more questions just now; I will tell you of all this to-morrow."

"Why, I protest I never heard any thing so romantic in the course of my life! Why here is an Ariadne and a labyrinth, and a Minotaur for aught I know, or some hobgoblin or other that will will do as well, to make out the mystery—time midnight—scene an illuminated garden. Why I never heard of any thing better for the foundation of a romance; but I would rather have had no romance in this instance, unless, indeed, that romance of real life—an honest love that ends in a happy marriage."

"My dear Altamont, you distress me. A truce to jesting."

"Jesting! I never was more in earnest."

"And so am I," rejoined Lord Mowbray, and left him somewhat abruptly.

Mr. Altamont again rejoined the ladies, who had by this time *reached the* supper-rooms, in which the whole company were now

assembled. Then rushed that hum and buzz of indefinite and discordant sound which rose and fell with painful pressure upon Lady Emily's ear. Once more they found themselves jammed up close to Lady Frances, immediately behind a door, from whence it was impossible either party should diverge till the crowd dispersed by mutual consent; and what made this vicinage more painful to Lady Emily was, that she was absolutely driven against Mr. Carlton, who was talking to Lady Frances. Mrs. Neville stood immediately before them and was not silent. "Well, my Lady Frances, so you are here again, with your fine gown—well, to be sure *it* has been amazingly admired," (laying a marked emphasis on the pronoun it) —"I dare say you are quite fresh, and not a plait out of place, eh? Well, charming, charming, it is beyond belief how some people are always thinking about their appearance."

Lady Frances now assumed one of those marble masks which some people learn to put on at pleasure, when they intend to repel the random shafts of blustering truth, and no Greek statue ever stood more apparently insensible to all that could be said. Scarce was the eyelid suffered to vibrate, while the quiet monosyllable, pronounced with all the passive insipidity of an automaton uttering by clock-work, left the beholder in doubt whether she were indeed a beautiful image or a living woman.

Mr. Carlton whispered in her ear, "What a vulgar woman! how came you to be acquainted with her? really, Lady Frances, I would not trust my character in your company, if you associate with such ostragoths."

"Dreadful!" was the reply; "never mind, we shall soon get rid of them."

"Mr. Carlton," said Lady Emily aloud, "you must be aware that I overhear your conversation, and that to speak disrespectfully of a friend of mine, when I am so situated that it is impossible for me to escape hearing you, is a sort of unpardonable rudeness of which I conceive no gentleman would wish to be guilty."

"I am sure, Lady Emily, I ask you a thousand pardons—a friend of yours is she? who could have dreamt of such a thing? what, that odd-looking personage? Oh! really I could not have imagined such a thing possible," and he bowed sarcastically.

"Did you ever," said Lady Frances to Lord Bellamont, who stood on the other side of her; while he, sufficiently displeased with the coxcombical pretensions of Mr. Carlton, and the coquettish manner in which she received his attentions, replied gravely, "I never heard

so powerful a rebuke, more femininely made, or more richly deserved."

"Nay now, dear Lord Bellamont, only look. It is quite impossible not to laugh; and if one lives in the world, it is, you must allow, in vain to fight all the battles of one's vulgar acquaintances. Pray do not make yourself so particular; really we shall be the jest of half the town if we quarrel *before* marriage. Afterwards, indeed, it will be only *selon les règles*."

"He is an impertinent——"

"Nay now, dear Bellamont, remember," cried Lady Frances, who began to be seriously alarmed for what might happen *before* marriage, and she laid her white, ungloved hand upon his arm.

Mr. Carlton, who had not the smallest intention of endangering his precious person, and seeing that this was not his golden opportunity, pushed through the crowd, and disappeared. "Softly, if you please, my good gentleman," said Mr. Altamont; "remember that we are not in the club of The Mohawks, of the *present times*, though we are in the presence, it may be, of some of that—*detestable gentry*."

"Well, to be sure, he has almost knocked me down," said Mrs. Neville. "Certainly such behaviour would not have been permitted or attempted when I was young. Well, it is beyond belief how much worse the world is become than it used to be."

"Pardon me," replied Mr. Altamont; "there I differ from you. Some hundred years ago, I make no doubt, they had their dandies and their coxcombs, and as many heartless and characterless people—as many licentious reprobates, as exist at the present moment, only under different names, perhaps, and appearance; and they will have the same a hundred years hence, in all probability; for there is, at all times, much evil in all human societies, and in great towns, of course, a larger proportion than elsewhere; but I maintain that the quantity of good is great also, so as to keep the preponderating scale in favour of virtue."

"Ah, well! you choose to look always on the bright side—that's your philosophy."

"It is true," interrupted Mr. Altamont. We have a parcel of fools, or ignorant idlers, who like to look like coachmen, because they are fit for nothing else, and pass their lives in jockey clubs, and at horse races; but we have heroes, and statesmen, and divines, also, that yield not in fame and worth to any of their predecessors. So it is a mixed world of good and evil. Do not rail at the present

times, my dear Mrs. Neville, nor at individuals. We are not fair judges of the former, for the very reason that we are too near them to entertain a dispassionate judgment of them; and as to the latter, it is unchristian to do so at our fellow-creatures; but it is quite right, fair, and proper, and our bounden duty, to lash the follies and rail at the vices *en masse* which come under our observation. I assure you that same employment is no sinecure; for my part, I had rather, however, whenever I can, sound the praises of the good and the great; and where is there a nation in the world—or where will there ever be, a court or a sovereign equal to our own, now, in this very now, without going back to past, or forward to future times?"

"Charming! well, to be sure, it is beyond belief, how eloquent you are! but if you had had your toes trod upon, as I had just now, by that rude coxcomb, you would not have been so sublime, but descended to particulars fast enough. Well, to be sure, charming, charming! and look there, there's the daylight beginning to break, I declare. Ha, ha, ha! only observe what an agitation Mrs. Dormer is in, to get away from it as fast as she can, with her old young ladies, for fear of the discovery which might ensue,—ha, ha, ha! And there's the Miss Frizbys, too, in a dreadful fright, with their rouge and their wrinkles; and all the other owners of the varnished faces done up for candle-light use. Well, to be sure, it's vastly amusing; charming, charming, I declare, to see them all scudding away from the windows; only see how they all hate that tell-tale daylight. My little lily here, Lady Emily, will show them another sight when the morning breaks upon *her* brow; she will look all the lovelier for it, let it shine ever so brightly: that's now what I call beauty, something quite natural, something that's true without and within. Well, to be sure, it is beyond belief; there they go again, ha, ha, ha! they cannot get away from it; look at them all with their yellow cracked faces, now the lacker is half on, half off."

"Hush, my dear Mrs. Neville, do not behave so ill," replied Mr. Altamont; "remember all truths will not do at all times; really you will get me into a scrape if you make me a party concerned in these dreadful anathemas that you are dealing out right and left."

"Well, to be sure, that is charming! I like your pretending to be afraid of the truth. You who never told a lie in your life to please man, woman, or child; and who have as often displeased, as pleased, by saying the most literal things in the most comical manner."

"Well, well, may be so, but all truths must not be spoken at all times."

"Oh! I cannot wait for time. When a thing comes into my head, out it pops; and, by the way, what is become of Lord Mowbray?"

"Gone off with one of the sky-rockets, depend upon it," replied Mr. Altamont, "that's his way; and really, considering how very ill Lady Emily looks, I really think, my dear Mrs. Neville, you had better follow his example; we are the last in the circle, and if you make haste, your carriage will be the first up."

"Well, to be sure, that will be charming; I hate waiting. Come along, Lady Emily.—Poor child! she does look tired; let us make haste; I love to be quick; there's not a moment to be lost,"—and away she went, heedless of all obstacles.

"Permit me, Lady Emily," said Mr. Altamont, giving his arm to her; when just as they arrived at the carriage-door, Lord Mowbray was waiting apparently to see them, for the instant they appeared, he came up to Lady Emily, and asked her permission to visit her next day.

"I am sure my uncle will be happy to see you," was her reply.

"Come along, child," cried Mrs. Neville; "do not stand talking there, my Lord Mowbray; I say, come into the carriage, we will set you home; and Mr. Altamont, we shall be all the better for your company; well, to be sure, I hate to be let down all of a sudden from the noise and crowd to a dead silence; it always makes me melancholy."

The gentleman accepted the invitation; and Mr. Altamont observed that Lady Emily's roses had bloomed again with the blushing of the morning. "There is something very refreshing," she said, "in the pure air, after all the heat and smoke we have been breathing, which cannot fail of doing one good."

"Why, yes," rejoined Mr. Altamont, "I have a very doubtful opinion of any young lady who does not hail Nature and daylight with renewed delight after a night of dissipation. However, I believe all natural feelings get comfortably obtuse after a few London campaigns; but that is not your case yet, Lady Emily."

"No," she replied, "and I trust it never will be. At all events, I am sure you must have a decidedly good opinion of me at present, for I can very truly declare I am happier at this moment than I was during the whole evening."

She felt her eyes involuntarily attracted by those of her opposite

companion, which were riveted on her, as she uttered these words; and she could not be ignorant of the language they spoke. A happy consciousness of reciprocity of sentiment supplied both with matter for silent but delightful thought, and scarcely were they sensible of the many good jokes of Mr. Altamont, and the observations of Mrs. Neville; so sweet, yet so confused a sensation of undefined and undefinable interest floated through their being; nor was it till Lady Emily found herself in her room, that the sun shining brightly on a dead wall, and the noise of the early cries in the street, brought down her thoughts to that matter-of-fact state, which reverted to all the painful and incomprehensible events of the evening, from which, fatigued and worn out, she was glad to take refuge in sleep.

CHAPTER XX.

Man's love is of man's life a thing apart;
'Tis woman's whole existence; man may range
The court, camp, church, the vessel, and the mart,
Sword, gown, gain, glory, offer in exchange,
Pride, fame, ambition to fill up his heart;
And few there are whom these can not estrange:
Men have all these resources, we but one;
To love again, and be again undone. BYRON.

FROM the time that Lord Mowbray first made Mr. Altamont acquainted with his intimacy with the Rosalinda, the latter had taken that communication seriously to heart. As a really good and high principled man, he felt alarmed for the dignity of his friend, and was touched by the conduct and character, however faulty and errroneous, of the unhappy Italian. To the wisest head Mr. Altamont united the tenderest heart; and he was altogether more completely engrossed by this story than he cared to allow. There was a person, indeed, who was so entirely identified with himself in every feeling of his being, so worthy of his confidence, that, for her, he could not have a secret. This person was his wife. On the present occasion, as on all others, they mutually consulted and commented upon what was best to be done for their young friend's honour and happiness; at the same time, no harsh or prejudiced sentiments were uttered against the interesting but imprudent individual, who, in forgetting what was due to herself as a woman and a responsible being endowed with *reason, had* by a misplaced devotion, which, thus erro-

neously indulged, is but a wretched idolatry, lost her happiness and endangered that of the person to whom she sacrificed her own.

Mr. and Mrs. Altamont, while they sought to find out what could best extricate Lord Mowbray from an entanglement in which his affections did not appear sufficiently involved to afford an excuse for making Rosalinda his wife, forgot not the compassion due to a woman who loved him with that entire self-abandonment of which women are alone capable.

At first, Mr. Altamont had thought (perhaps he had wished) to find that she was an interested, designing person; but the greater pains he took to sift her motives, and the more he observed her narrowly, the less he believed this; and he had himself too much truth of character, too much nobility of soul, to avail himself of such commonplace unjust abuse, in order to detach Lord Mowbray entirely from her. But Mrs. Altamont, with that fine tact which belongs only to her sex, and with that quick and keen perception which supplies the place of more extensive knowledge of the world, which the opportunities of men afford to their stronger minds, had seen at a glance that the danger of Lord Mowbray's marrying Rosalinda no longer existed. "Trust me," she said, "if ever I knew what love meant, and that I do know it, *you* at least will not deny,—Lord Mowbray's heart is for ever engaged. Lady Emily Lorimer will be his bride, or bride will he never take. I conceive, therefore, that it is not of him we need think; but however romantic or foolish you may accuse me of being, my heart, I confess it, bleeds for that unhappy mistaken woman, who has made wreck of her own felicity by giving the reins to an unrequited passion. If there is a sorrow upon earth which I commiserate, it is a woman's unrequited love. Think what conflicts must have been hers, ere she yielded to the slavery; what tortures of shame, of pride, and remorse! Whatever exaltation of imagination may, at times, make her glory in her debasement, there are others when she must be bowed and crushed beneath the weight of a self-contemning spirit. Delicacy and pride, the inherent principles of a woman's nature, are never violated with impunity. Poor, poor, Rosalinda! what will become of her?"

"Well, well, I feel for her too," replied the kind Mr. Altamont, with a tear trembling in his eye: "but charity begins at home; and our friend Lord Mowbray's honour and dignity must first be thought of; and if indeed he is, as you suppose, attached seriously to Lady Emily Lorimer, the very best thing he can do is to marry her as *soon as possible.*"

"Ah! you men," sighed Mrs. Altamont, "how little do you think on the crushed and humbled heart, when the voice of situation and circumstances demands your attention!"

"Come, come, Fanny, this to me—I will not allow you to talk so." And the soft reproaches that ensued were made amends for, by the still softer pressure to the heart of wedded love.

Shortly after this conversation, a notice was put in the public papers, that, owing to indisposition, the Rosalinda had withdrawn her engagement from the stage, and forfeited her salary. What was to be done? was the ill-fated Italian to die in a strange land unaided? No! Mr. Altamont, not less prompt in decision than clear-sighted in counsel, determined to seek her out, engage her confidence, and if he found her worthy of consolation and assistance, to afford it to her by every means in his power. He was warmly seconded in this resolve by his wife, who with those tender feelings so peculiarly her own, urged the fulfilment of this kind determination with the sincerest interest.

After some trouble, Mr. Altamont discovered Rosalinda in an obscure lodging in Pimlico. The late beautiful creature, the admired of the multitude, was now a lone forsaken being, faded in beauty, evidently in reduced circumstances, and in the rapid and untimely decline of health and strength. There was a simplicity in the dignity of Rosalinda's reception of him, which belongs in a peculiar manner to Italian women. With none of those factitious elegancies that characterize the French, nor the studied fascination practised by some other nations, they certainly possess a grace in their abandonment to Nature which supersedes all other feminine enchantment. It is the difference between a Grecian statue and an opera dancer; the drapery of an antique to the trimming of a milliner.

This failed not to produce its effect upon Mr. Altamont; and in some degree it abashed him. Conscious, however, of the integrity of his purpose, he ventured, after some apology, to hint that he was acquainted in part with her history; and that he feared from the circumstance mentioned in the popular newspapers of the day, that she might be reduced to require the assistance of a friend; and then he volunteered to become that friend in a tone and manner which could leave no doubt of his sincerity and no suspicion of his motive.

Rosalinda, with perfect frankness, acknowledged her gratitude at finding such an unexpected blessing as a sympathizing friend in her

hour of need, and while she declined all pecuniary assistance, gratefully accepted his proffered friendship.

Every time Mr. Altamont was in her society, he became more and more interested in her, and was mournfully convinced that he had no cause for apprehension as to the result of her influence over Lord Mowbray, since it was evident that a rapid decline was bearing Rosalinda quickly beyond this world's cares.—The conviction he felt of her purity of mind, notwithstanding her aberration from those rules of conduct which no woman can overpass or contemn without paying the price of lost happiness for their error, made him at length determine to take his wife to see her, and he could give no greater proof of the deep impression of interest with which she had inspired him.

The lonely and unhappy Italian seemed to revive under the consciousness of not being deemed unworthy of the attention of the good and pure of her own sex; for even those who have lost all title to such society, feel the bitterness of the pang which makes them tacitly acknowledge the justice of that sentence which deprives them of such association.

As Rosalinda's strength daily decreased, and she became aware herself that she could not long survive the rapid progress of her malady, she said one day to Mrs. Altamont—"Before I die, I must see Lord Mowbray once again." It was a sudden burst of feeling which made her utter these words, and having broken the seal which hitherto closed her lips in silence, she found a solace in frequently addressing her indulgent auditress on this theme, the engrossing object of her whole unhappy existence. At various intervals, stimulated by sudden impulses of feeling, Rosalinda laid open by degrees her whole life to Mrs. Altamont;—had these detached fragments been embodied in a continued narrative, they would have told the following story:—After having confessed that sudden attachment to Lord Mowbray, the particulars of which have already been detailed, she declared that from the time she had become convinced he did not love her,—for "I call not by that name," she said, "the gentle and kindly sentiment with which he requited my devotion to him,—I formed but one plan, I looked forward but to one goal—it is that which I am now about to see realized, an early death! But I resolved that during the time I sojourned upon earth I would always follow him wherever he went, breathe the same air, tread *the same soil*, and occasionally gaze upon those features which had *been so fatal to me*. For this sole purpose I followed him to Eng-

land—for none other. I had no hope of being united to him. I would not have become his wife, convinced as I was, that compassion alone, and not love, would have obtained for me that boon. I had not been long in England, however, when I found my pecuniary resources were at an end. The distant relations to whom, by the terms on which I held them, my estates became forfeit so soon as I should live beyond a stipulated time out of Italy, took speedy advantage of the circumstance; stopped my rents, laid claim to my palaces and domains, and I found myself in a strange land, without even a single friend, on the eve of utter destitution. What could I do? to whom could I apply? to Lord Mowbray? ah! no,—sooner die than make known my situation to him; that he should *guess* I had followed him, I would bear; but that he should think I was persecuting him by my presence, sueing to him for subsistence,—no, Rosalinda was not made for that.

"I thought then, for the first time, of the value of the talent with which nature and my native soil had endowed me, and offered myself as Prima Donna for the Opera House. My skill was approved, my voice commended; and I entered upon my new career with a feeling of proud independence, that those only can know, who, born to luxury and splendour, find themselves unexpectedly called upon to derive from their own exertions and self-resources those comforts and accessories to mere existence which, perhaps, are never known to be luxuries, or are never duly tasted as such, till we have felt what it is to lose them, or to purchase them by our own personal exertions. So long as my health was unimpaired, I fainted not under my lot, but gloried in it. I received a large salary. It sufficed me amply in the way in which I lived, and the situation I had chosen to fill was less painful to me than I had anticipated; for, knowing no one, and being unknown, I thought only of gaining the approbation of the public in my capacity of singer, and was totally reckless of the various conjectures formed in respect to me. Often, when on the stage, the thought of one being alone inspired me; and I was so totally abstracted, though in presence of an immense multitude, that his image only appeared to fill the theatre; for him I sang, for him I felt, for him I poured forth my whole soul, and the people wondered—and while I was acting Medea, some of them said, 'She is, or must have been, truly mad,' and they were right—if love be madness. But I knew I had only felt what I expressed, and that I had not acted well, but suffered intensely—not thought of

obtaining applause, but of giving utterance to the sentiments which were consuming me.

"When the Opera closed for the season, I learnt where Lord Mowbray resided, and to that neighbourhood I followed. I lived obscurely; no one thought of inquiring who I was, and all I wished was from time to time to see him as he passed my cottage window or gave orders to his work people. In the anguish of this joy, I lived—I never attempted any employment—I never opened a book. What was all I had once taken delight in *now* to me? Music was dissonance; poetry, tasteless; the long long days succeeded to each other in dread monotony; their sum was computed only by the few brief moments when I beheld him; and these moments I notched on a willow bough, which I kept for that purpose; it was at once my calendar and my emblem—a broken sapless branch, torn from its native stem, marked with love's destructive seal, a worthless, useless, melancholy thing.

"When Lord Mowbray quitted his castle, he went to Montgomery Hall, and I still followed. The report of the transcendent beauty of the Lady Lorimers reached even me, and the prescience of passion told me, that one of them was destined to become his bride. I cannot say why this belief should have added much to my wretchedness, for I had long before resigned every hope; yet at this conviction, the fever that was consuming me, burst with fresh fury in my veins, and I knew that death would, ere long, end my sufferings. I became more impatient than ever to see Lord Mowbray as frequently as possible; yet to do so, was infinitely more difficult than it had been at Mowbray Castle, as he seldom left the precincts of the Park; and without being recognised I could not easily indulge my longing eyes with the only sight they wished to see.

"One day, as I was sauntering about in a lane, and devising means to gratify the desire I felt only to behold him at a distance, I met some gipsies, whom I immediately recognised as such from their resemblance to some of their caste whom I had seen in my own country. One girl of the name of Lushee particularly attracted me, for she read my fortune in my face, and told me I should die for love. I was grateful for the prophecy, and in return I gave her money. She asked me if there was any thing she could do for me. I told her she could serve me materially, by letting me disguise myself as one of her tribe, and take me to the Hall, so that I could see the persons living there without being seen. Lushee cast her

glittering eyes about, as if in search of the means to comply with my request, and then promised to come to the cottage where I lived, and give me an answer.

"One night, she told me she could fulfil my bidding, and I had only to follow her in silence. I did so. We reached the park of Montgomery Hall. Lushee applied a key to one of the gates; it opened, and admitted us; and she led me to the walls of the house. The shutters of the windows of one of the apartments were open. Lushee jumped upon a ledge that jutted out a few feet from the ground, and, looking in at that window, beckoned to me to do the same. I did so, and beheld Lord Mowbray and another gentleman: for near an hour, I gazed at him. I could see the varying expression of his countenance, and every now and then I could catch the meaning of what his companion was saying to him. I sat absorbed in the contemplation of that countenance whose every turn and expression I had so often watched, and I fancied I could trace a feeling depicted on his features similar to that which I had seen when we met at Naples for the last time. A pang of self-reproach contracted his brow, and the melancholy half smile that played around his lips, seemed to imply that even in his mirth there was sadness. It was thus, at least, I interpreted the meaning of his look; when suddenly the violent ejaculation of the gentleman who was talking to him startled Lushee, and she uttered a slight shriek; at the same instant he turned round, and, seizing one of the candlesticks, hurled it furiously at the window at which we were placed. Lushee dropped down to the ground with the quickness of lightning, and evaded the broken glass; and as the room was now in obscurity, she turned a lantern she held full upon them, and beheld the gentleman, who had just committed the violence, flinging about the furniture in a furious manner, right and left, which seemed to her so ridiculous that she laughed heartily, and the more she laughed, the more enraged he became. I entreated her to cease; and, to avoid detection, I took her by the arm, and we ran away as fast as we could.

"Often and often did I repeat these nocturnal visits; but afterwards I went alone, for I dared not trust the mirthful and mischievous Lushee. One other time, however, I had recourse to her for assistance. As I had learnt from her that Lord Mowbray was positively to marry one of the Lady Lorimers, I had an invincible longing to behold them; and Lushee, ever delighted to have an opportunity of exercising her ingenuity, soon gave me notice that she had obtained means, *through the servants*, to effect this. It was a weak curiosity,

I confess; it was a restless desire to identify myself with all that interested him even in the most painful and perhaps humiliating of all circumstances, that of forming an interest in and for the person from whose heart I was for ever to be banished.

"O! you—and all such as you, Mrs. Altamont, who, in the blessed bands of mutual and honourable love, see your duties and your affections walking on in the same undivided path, pity the wretched of your sex, who devote themselves to a man without the hope of a return of love; who voluntarily sacrifice themselves to a shrine, whose votive offerings are tears and pangs which bear them finally to dishonour or the grave. But I linger, and please myself by dwelling on feelings which you cannot understand; for the same principle of love makes me find a sort of delight in my torture. I will hasten to the end of my disastrous history. I beheld the fortunate woman destined to be the bride of Mowbray. Lushee took me even into the bed-room of the beautiful sisters; but they awoke, and were terrified, supposing they saw something supernatural, and we fled, with difficulty escaping detection. From this time I never repeated these wild and useless visits. I even quitted the neighbourhood, for I dared not trust myself longer in its precincts.

"I had now but one wish left, and kind Providence seemed to listen to my prayers. To appear in public—to exert my talents, was no longer possible to me. I resigned my engagement at the theatre, and with it the means almost of subsistence, for my remittances from abroad were irregularly paid, and were reduced to a sum wholly inadequate to the expenses of a sojourn in this country. Still I determined to die here, that my ashes might mingle in the soil which, as Lord Mowbray's country—

"You know the rest—you have soothed the latter moments of my days—for ever blessed may you be for having come to the aid of one, who was neglected, scorned, forlorn, and vilified; yes, my dear friends, you will be repaid for your generous kindness. To Lord Mowbray convey my last message, of never-failing love; I exonerate him from all design whatever to have brought me to this end; he meant nothing serious, nothing beyond admiration and kindness; but, oh! let your sex beware, my revered Mr. Altamont, of that indulgence in the vanity of receiving the homage of ours, which in the world is esteemed at most a venial trespass, but which is often productive of indescribable wretchedness. Yet say not *this to Lord Mowbray*; say only that I died for love of him."

Mr. and Mrs. Altamont received her confidence with all the tender concern it merited; and they yielded to Rosalinda's last expressed wish of seeing Lord Mowbray once more before she died. For this purpose, Mr. Altamont set forth from Pimlico, with an aching heart, to seek his friend.

On the morning after the ball, at Roehampton, Lord Mowbray was indulging in the hope to which the previous evening's occurrences had given birth, and had almost screwed his courage to the sticking place, after having lulled certain remorse of conscience to rest: he was preparing to declare himself in due form to Lady Emily, when his servant announced Mr. Altamont. It required all Lord Mowbray's self-command to prevent the peevish *not at home* from being uttered in the face of his friend.

Mr. Altamont entered the room at the same moment, and mistaking the sudden action of Lord Mowbray's darting to the door, for a kindly greeting, cordially seized hold of this hand. The action so little corresponded with Lord Mowbray's present feelings, that he could not conceal the awkwardness he felt. "You were going out, my dear Lord; at another time I should have apologised for my intrusion, and have taken the more than hint which is conveyed in the expression of your countenance; but as it is, allow me to say I must detain you. I have a long and somewhat sad story to tell, but nevertheless it must be told; and, after what I observed last night, it is perhaps the very moment when it had best be told:

'It's good to be merry and wise;
It's good to be just and true;
It's good to be off wi' the auld love,
Before ye be on wi' the new.'

Now it is of this I am come to talk to you: poor Rosalinda is dying!"

Lord Mowbray turned pale. "Rosalinda dying!—tell me not so. Let me go instantly to her."

"Be collected, my dear Lord; do not hurry into her presence till she is prepared to see you. Every necessary aid her present exigencies require, has been procured for her: there is no need for this sudden ebullition of feeling; but there *was* great need of some recollection of what was due to a woman, who in the hour of her prosperity had sacrificed every thing to you."

"Altamont, I can bear a great deal from you," said Lord Mowbray rising; "but this I cannot endure. You take advantage of a confidence *I reposed in* you to upbraid me unjustly. Pray how was

I to know that Rosalinda was reduced to poverty and distress? were you not the first to counsel me to avoid her? did you not frequently and forcibly represent to me how unfitting it was that I should continue an intimacy with a person too good to be sacrificed to a mere fancy, yet wholly unfitting to become my wife? and if in following your advice and losing sight of her, I have been left in total ignorance of her distress, do I deserve so severe a rebuke?"

"What, is it possible that the Rosalinda has never applied to you for assistance, never made known her pitiable condition to you?"

"Never!"—

"No, I know she has not; for I have become accidentally intimate with her, and she has confided her secret to me; I only asked the question to bring more forcibly home to you the magnanimity of her conduct. She is, I must say it, a very extraordinary person; and my heart is truly touched at her misfortunes; but they are fast drawing to a close; she has but a few hours in all probability to live; yield to her last wish, and come with me to see her once more ere she leaves this world and its sorrows!"

Lord Mowbray passed his arm through Mr. Altamont's, and without uttering a word walked away with him. It must be owned that the sacrifice of a present desire to the fulfilment of a duty of gratitude was a sacrifice; but still he would have loathed himself could he have acted otherwise. Nevertheless, the idea that Lady Emily was expecting him, perhaps blaming him for not coming after the events of the preceding evening; accusing him, it might be, of conduct of the very same nature which he had already practised in his intercourse with another, was an idea which almost distracted him.

When he entered the humble lodging in which Rosalinda resided, he pressed his hand on his forehead and groaned as he murmured inaudibly—"Is this an abode for her who dwelt in palaces?—where are her orange gardens, her fountains, her flowers, her numerous train of attendants and adorers?" And then he spake aloud and said,—"is she come to this?"

"Ay, cried Mr. Altamont; "and a fortunate event for her that she is come to *this*. I wish you had seen the wretchedness from which it pleased Providence that it should have been my lot to rescue her."

Mr. Altamont then related all that he knew of her since that time, and of his wife's friendly and even tender interest in her, till Lord Mowbray's whole soul was racked with remorse and anguish. A consciousness of self-reproach smote him with the goading remem-

brance that when Rosalinda was in prosperity and living in a country where she was honoured and loved, he had basked in the sunshine of her destiny; he had enjoyed the gratification of her society, till something of a tenderer nature stole over his being, and it was not till he came to England and recollected that he might forget, in this indulgence, his station in English life, his advantages in rank and society, that he withdrew from her presence entirely; that he estranged himself totally from her acquaintance, and had never seen her but to fly from her as though she had been a pestilence; and what greater pestilence can there be than the secret sense of having wronged a helpless, defenceless, devoted woman!

In vain Lord Mowbray laid "the flattering unction to his soul" that he had never sought her love; and that accident had brought them together; that she courted him in a way impossible to withstand; that he had ever honoured and respected her. Still, still, he felt he ought never to have allowed an appearance of attachment on his part to lead her into an illusion so fatal to her peace: that which was play to him was death to her. He acknowledged all this now, when it was too late, and paid the price of error with a bitter pang.

Rosalinda's death-bed was a scene of deep and impressive awe; but it was calm and resigned. She took leave of Lord Mowbray as a friend, but never reproached or upbraided him. She ascribed her early death to the climate, and to too much exertion: and, in the warmest terms of gratitude, she acknowledged her obligation to Mr. and Mrs. Altamont. When Lord Mowbray was overcome with grief and yielded to a burst of sorrow which could not be suppressed, she besought him to let their last meeting, like their first, be one of brightness. "Detain of me," she said, addressing him, "only a gentle and soft remembrance. I would not have any harsh or bitter thought mingle in the recollection you may cherish of me." Her final adieus were equally calm, touching, and dignified; and she then composed her mind to those great duties which alone can bring peace at the last.

Lord Mowbray and Mrs. Altamont were in the house till Rosalinda's soul had fled; and then Lord Mowbray gave unrestrained course to his feelings. He ordered every respect to be paid to the remains of one who had been so truly devoted to him; and, hastily leaving London, he retired to Mowbray Castle, where he saw no one, and passed the winter in solitude and sorrow. When the recollection of Lady Emily, and of his own apparently cruel rudeness

Arabella—'When all this is over we shall manage well enough; but it must be confessed this is mighty tiresome.—Did you ever——?'

"At length it *was* over, and the bride and bridegroom having changed their dress, and taken a formal leave of the company, departed for their villa at Richmond. Shortly after, the rest of the company dispersed; and it was a relief to me when I found myself once more alone with my uncle. There had been a sort of condescending affability displayed on the part of the Duke of Godolphin to my uncle, which I felt must be painful to him; and as we drove from the door, he said to me, closing his eyes as you know is his wont when any thing agitates him with pain or pleasure—'I have done now with this idle farce for ever.'—'What, my dear uncle,' I ventured to say, although a reverential respect made me put the question timidly, 'what do your words imply?'—'Oh, nothing, my dearest and best, but that I shall henceforward live to myself, and to her who is so truly my own child in heart, that I feel her to be a part of myself; but the world, the heterogeneous mass of the heartless and the vain who pursue the things of this life as though they could last for ever; of these, my Emily, and all such as these, I have taken my final adieu.' 'Dearest uncle,' I said, 'you make me melancholy—not that I lament the gaieties of a town-life, for I can be happy any where; but I lament to see that your former cheerfulness has forsaken you: might I not venture to ask the cause? not from curiosity but from heartfelt interest.' '*You* may do any thing, my Emily; but the seat of my sorrow lies too deep for removal. Two things alone remain for me: religious resignation and the grave. They may and *will* bring peace; but joy on earth is not to be my portion more.' 'Dear, dear uncle, say not so, I beseech you,'—and I burst into tears. He rejoined, 'Well, my best comforter, my earthly treasure, you are still left me. I ought to be grateful. Emily,' he continued, 'I charge you never let us renew this conversation.' He pronounced these last words so solemnly, that my blood seemed to run cold.

"There is then a subject on which we are never to touch, a bound we are never to overpass, a barrier to free communication. What a change does this fatal prohibition not produce in my relation with my ever honoured uncle! And oh! Alpinia, if you knew all I have heard, you would pity me; but to no human being can I mention this terrible secret. I am strong in the confidence that the dark innendo which met my ear is a false and base aspersion; but I have too much reason to believe it is not unknown to my uncle, and it is undermining the very springs of his existence. Why does he not shake it off at once? why does he not disperse the pestilential vapour which poisons his existence? But enough—too much; Alpinia, my heart is overcharged, or I should not have allowed myself to express my feelings; I know it is my duty to suffer in silence.

"Two days after Frances's wedding, my uncle asked me to walk out with him; I obeyed with alacrity. This request brought back the remembrance of former days; we walked on in silence through the streets—a silence I was not inclined to break, as there was something in my uncle's manner which prevented my asking him any questions; at length I ventured to say, 'My dear Sir, I am sadly afraid you will be fatigued.'—'We have not far to go now,' was his reply; and we reached Westminster Bridge. Here he called to a waterman, and having procured a boat, we stepped into it. The busy Thames, the noise of the town, and the rude voices of those who were plying their various craft on the river—the dome of St. Paul's dimly seen in the distance, and the nearer spires of Westminster Abbey, created a medley of thoughts and feelings which were not in unison with the interest that ab-

ibed me. I wished I had never seen those sights, or heard those sounds. I ined to connect all that I had ever known of pain or trouble with them, and they re distasteful to me. As I sat in the boat, thus lost in a variety of sensations by y uncle's side, he took my hand and said, 'Now, dearest Emily, once more flect ere you decide irrevocably. You are going with an aged man to a life of clusion, and, when contrasted with your former existence, of comparative hard- ip. You may yet avoid this; you may continue to dwell in the sunshine of pros- rity and the lap of luxury; but if you follow my fortunes, you will, even young nd lovely as you are, probably be forgotten, and may spend the flower of your youth nnoticed. In tending the declining days of your old uncle, you may, and pro- ably will, lose all the advantages of worldly prosperity and consideration which a ifferent mode of existence might secure you. I am selfish, I fear, in allowing ou to make this sacrifice; and at least I must once more represent to you, in true olours, the nature of the choice you have made.'

"'Do not,' I said, interrupting him, 'do not, I beseech you, wrong me by supposing for a moment that any thing can make me desert you. The more wretched, the more forsaken you are by the world, the more I will endeavour to make you forget such an unworthy world, and such undeserved sorrow; and I can only simply assure you, that in living with you under any circumstances, I am fulfilling the natural impulse of my heart; whereas, away from you, nothing could make me happy.'—'You will not go,' rejoined my uncle, 'to an elegant retirement, where books and flowers, and the mental luxuries of life, create a never-failing spring of enjoyment to minds such as yours, trained by habit as well as taste to derive pleasure from the resources they afford; but you will live in a habitation devoid of outward charm, where the bare necessaries of life are maintained by frugal economy, and where the occupation of the mind is merely how to exist. We are not about to live in any region of romantic beauty, where the fancy is excited by scenery or romance so as to make it forget privation, or delight in solitude; but we go to the plain monotony of an English country habitation, devoid of those luxuries which have become by use mere necessaries, to the presence of which you are unconscious, but to whose absence you will be painfully alive; and to the tame aspect of common nature in her least beautiful garb. Can you endure this weighty pressure of existence? Oh! my Emily, look well at the contrast. With your sister, wealth and pleasure will surround you; the persons you will see are of a rank and situation in life suitable to your own; some one among the number may even be worthy of you, and you will have a fair opportunity of making such an alliance as will secure these advantages to you for life. Pause and reflect, I entreat you, on this alternative;—can you forego these advantages, and embrace these certain hardships, with all their future contingencies of privation.'

"With alacrity and cheerfulness did I reply, 'Since I am to exist with you and for you, indeed, my dearest uncle, you know not the boundless satisfaction I feel, in thinking that at last I shall be useful to you. At last I shall be able to prove the gratitude I feel for the care and love you have bestowed on me.' 'My blessed Emily, it is enough! Why should I teaze you with farther doubts? Heaven has left me one incalculable blessing in leaving me yourself. It were impiety to its mercy to question you farther; my dear, dear child, you will be rewarded for this generous devotion—that is my best consolation in dragging you down to the level of my fallen fortunes. And now, my Emily, listen to the arrangements I have made, in order to avoid the unpleasant circumstances to which our mode of depar-

ture from London would otherwise have subjected us. I have hired apartments in an obscure inn in Westminster for a few nights, and thence we can proceed unobserved to the place of our destination.'

"This was perhaps the only part of my uncle's communication which seriously pained me. I had expected a visit from Lord Mowbray—he had led me to expect it; and as we had at the Roehampton fête been witnesses to a scene, or rather hearers of a conversation which was most painfully interesting to me, I did think that he would not leave London without coming, as he had promised, to speak to me on that subject; but now that we have removed clandestinely, no one knows whither, —that my uncle has only left his one faithful servant, Edwards, to settle every thing in Sackville Street, and charged him on no account to divulge the secret,—I feel certain that I shall see Lord Mowbray no more; and the idea that I shall not have it in my power to remove any unfavourable impression that he might have received regarding my uncle, cut me to the heart. I cannot, however communicate this feeling to the latter, and I endeavour to conceal from him the disappointment I experienced.

"Adieu, my dear Alpinia:—our destination is (as my uncle informs me) the neighbourhood of Bristol. We set off to-morrow; and, as soon as possible after our arrival, you shall hear again, and most minutely, from your ever affectionate "Emily Lorimer."

The second letter was dated from Bentley Farm, Somersetshire.

"My dear Alpinia—We are at length happily settled in our new abode.—But I shall resume my narrative where I left off in my last.

"During the two days we remained at the inn, I confess I indulged a vague kind of expectation—I cannot call it hope—hope is far too bright a thing for so colourless a vision; still the indistinct form of pleasurable feeling hovered around me; but when one lowering rainy morning we set out to go, I knew not whither, outcasts at it seemed, from home and friends, with a gloomy mystery attached to us, my heart died within me. I looked in my uncle's face, that dear face which for so many years I had ever seen reflecting the serenity of his soul; but it was now pale and fixed, in an expression of melancholy which I knew it was beyond my power to change. I felt the more how much it was my duty to conceal my own feelings, and this very knowledge increased the difficulty of my task; but I thought of applying to that high source of all comfort, which never fails those who truly seek it, and I gradually looked beyond the present moment, and experienced that renovating sense of satisfaction which is sometimes even the blessed handmaid of sorrow.

"When we reached the open country, the dense atmosphere of London no longer enveloped every object in its deadening shroud. The trees, even in their leafless state, were to me not devoid of beauty; the formation of the branches, their various barks, and occasionally the green and glossy ivy that crept around them; the many-coloured browns of the fallen leaves of the hedges; the bramble, that despised but beautiful child of humble nature, with its plaited leaves of varied dies, sometimes vivid scarlet, sometimes yellow, sometimes of a rich purple, were all well-known and well-loved acquaintances, that gave me back my own natural feelings; and I recognized them, in going slowly along, as so many assurances that there exist a thousand resources of entertainment and reflection in what is called

the most common of things—common! what can properly deserve that epithet of all the works of creation? None surely; they are all replete with infinite wisdom. Who that regards them as they deserve to be regarded, can for a moment doubt the power and goodness of their Creator, or feel themselves hopeless?

"Such were the thoughts that gradually restored my mind to its native tone of healthful serenity; and by the time we were thirty miles from town, I insensibly found myself talking with animated cheerfulness to my uncle, and was repaid for the effort I had made, by observing that he actually listened to me with a pleased attention; and if I could not remove altogether the heavy weight which oppressed him, I certainly did alleviate and lighten its burthen.

"When we found ourselves in a small comfortable parlour in the inn at Murell Green, and that Edwards brought in our few things, stirred up the fire, and saw us settled with our respective books before us, and conversing with apparent cheerfulness, he stopped a moment at the door, and said,—'who 'd hae thought it?—but thank God!'—Many times before the supper was brought in, this faithful domestic made excuses to come into the room; sometimes it was to know how my uncle chose his bed made, sometimes to ask if he would not draw off his boots and put on his slippers, sometimes to know if he could be of no service to my Ladyship. 'I am but a sorry lady's maid,' he said;—'Oh that ever we should come to this!' and he dashed a tear from his cheek.

"I was touched by this proof of feeling, but grieved at its expression, ecause I saw my uncle's countenance darken into despondency; and for the rest of the evening he did not recover any degree of cheerfulness.

"On the morning we arrived at Bristol, there was a heavy fall of snow, and we remained at our inn without moving out. The next day was bright and sunshiny; and as our remaining journey to our new abode was very short, I ventured to propose a walk to see the town. I thought it might serve to take off my uncle's thoughts from their own melancholy contemplations; and you know my insatiable love of seeing localities and knowing their history is such, that I would take a great deal of touble, and find pleasure in the trouble too, to gratify my curiosity in this respect. I assure you, Bristol repays one for one's pains. Besides its claim to attention as a great commercial city, it is full of minor matters of interest. The remaining bits of Elizabethan architecture are in the best taste of English fashion. There are door-ways, and architraves, and arches which well deserve to be preserved from decay; and it is a pity that some artist does not save them from oblivion.

"The magnitude of the town, its excellent massive dwelling-houses, its busy streets and opulent inhabitants, tell of the great source of England's wealth, and, as Florence did of old, exalt its merchants to the grade and state of Princes. Yet the bustle of trade does not convey to me any feeling of real exhilaration; there is something in that money-getting, bartering, gold-making activity, which is rather depressing. And for what is all this stir, this wonderous anxiety? for gold, and more gold still; not to add to enjoyment either for self or others, but to gratify the insatiable longing for more and more wealth; and when I am told, but this in itself is enjoyment, I recoil from the information,—I cannot believe it—it is the unsatisfactory restless passion of some demoniacal agency, not the dignified repose and delight of a being ultimately intended for those regions, 'where neither moth nor rust corrupt, nor thieves break through and steal.'

"*Such were my feelings,* dear Alpinia, as my uncle and I paced the thronged

streets of Bristol; and then all those vessels coming and going, bearing away many from all they loved, to seek—for death, it may be, in unwholesome climes, or 'the bubble reputation even in the cannon's mouth!' How my sick heart shrunk inward to rest upon other things!

"We left Bristol about twelve o'clock, and every turn of the carriage-wheel awoke an unexpected delight; for the country we came to, was one whose features were unlike any I had seen; and, even under the unfavourable aspect of frost and snow, was fraught with a character of sublimity which I had never before beheld. The ascent to Clifton was precipitous; and when we reached its summit, the eye wandered over a vast expanse of country, richly intersected with long lines of wood, and here and there a single tree stood out like a pillar giving relief to the distance. The ground too was finely broken, and some picturesque pieces of rock lifted up their dark forms amid the snow, appearing darker still from the contrasted whiteness around them; but the striking part of the scenery lay to the left, where the Avon winds between the narrow rocks; a feature which has been likened to the Vale of Tempe. On one side, covered with wood; on the other, bare, bold, and precipitous. The line of the horizon is high, and, in the clear atmosphere of frost, was drawn like a brilliant blue zone around the landscape.

"I was enchanted, and expressed myself so to my dear uncle, who, pressed my hand and said I made him young again. But the fact is, that he is peculiarly alive to impressions of grandeur or of beauty, whether of nature or art, and requires no impulse to be given him save that of his own mind. We continued our way over this high region, for about four or five miles, the road gradually becoming more rugged; and then, turning off to the right, descended into a wooded ravine, from whence we again emerged and re-ascended. Half-way up a steep acclivity, a large rambling low farm-house was seen; part of it was old, with clustering stack chimneys and pointed windows; the rest, of more modern aspect. A farm-yard lay on one side, a wood on the other. At the door of this house, the carriage stopped.

"'Here we are,' said my uncle, with a heavy sigh. 'Oh! what a beautiful view!' I exclaimed; and in fact nothing could be finer; we looked over extensive woods belonging to some great domain below us, on to the Bristol Channel, where the white sails were glittering like diamonds on the sea; and if there was a loneliness in the frost-covered waste around us, there was a grandeur in it not devoid of charm. 'How happy we may be here!' I said, helping my uncle to alight, while several of the farm dogs came barking and frisking around us, as though to welcome us; for in these delightful animals there are testimonies of courtesy or the reverse, easily distinguished by those who read them aright, and are accustomed to their language. A very cleanlooking old woman stood in attendance, whose genuine country manners prepossessed me in her favour. She ushered us along a passage broad enough to admit of various implements of husbandry, arranged in an orderly manner on the ground on either side; and above these, various herbs were hung up to dry; the wainscoted walls of unpainted walnut-wood were carefully kept of their original colour, save that time had mellowed them, and the huge beams which supported the roof, were rather ornamental than otherwise. The end of this passage opened into a large room; an immense chimney-piece, the pyramidal form of which reached half-way up the roof, surmounted a fireplace, where a fire was burning brightly with ample logs of wood, and the floor of this apartment was so shining and bright that it reflected the joyous blaze in a long line

lancing light. Some rude medallions of coloured plaister, decorated or rather figured the panelling of the walls; and to the huge beam that ran across the f and seemed to give security to the vaulted chasm above, were appended several adles of flax, some spindles, and other symbols of good housewifery. A range high-backed chairs, elaborately worked in tent stitch, whose piony roses, albeit ittle faded, still bore testimony to the taste and industry of the dames of former ys, were arranged in comely row around the apartment; and two, much larger an the rest, were placed on either side the chimney. One immense table emed immoveably fixed in the middle of the room, and one other occupied half e side of it under a window of unusually large dimensions, in which some re- ains of painted glass still decorated the upper casements.

" 'What capabilities there are here for comfort!' I exclaimed. 'Only a few ofas and books, and flowers, and this room would be enchanting; and look here, lear uncle, here are two cabinets of such a shape and such material as one might vish were one's own.' These were fine massive presses of carved wood that stood in recesses by the chimney. I opened the doors of one of them, and saw the lower shelves filled with household linen and piles of yarn to make more; while on the upper, were a few books; exactly those kind of dingy, respectable, antiquated out- sides, which promise so much pith and marrow within.

"Nor was I mistaken. First, lay on its side the Family Bible, with large silver clasps; then, as worthy of the neighbourhood, there were arranged by its side, Boston's 'Crook in the Lot,' Lewis Bayley's 'Practice of Piety,' Jeremy Taylor's 'Holy Living and Dying,' and Baxter's 'Saints' Rest.' Some of these I had read before. You remember, Alpinia, while I used to sit at work under the beech-trees at dear Montgomery Hall, you used to read to me that beautiful, poe- tical, sublime, and pious book, the 'Holy Living and Dying.' The others I felt sure must be worthy of perusal, as they were in such good company; for books of the same sort, like persons of the same pursuits, generally congregate together, although profane hands or ill chance may occasionally part or mismatch them.

"My uncle smiled at the delight I expressed, and then with a serious sweetness added, though it seems vain to repeat his praise of myself, 'The virtuous find friends every where, and my Emily is of these. We have indeed great cause of thankfulness.' My heart responded to this acknowledgment.

"And now came in Edwards, with all the busy hustling of his affectionate ser- vice, as if he tried to make up by noise and activity for the lack of that numerous train with which he had been accustomed to see my uncle surrounded: 'Will you, not please, Sir, to look at your apartments above stairs? The beds seem very good, though the walls are rather dingy, and Mrs. Bentley keeps on rousing fires, and I hope your Honour and my Lady will catch no cold.' 'Go, Emily, love,' said my uncle, 'and report to me how you are lodged; I am too old a soldier to care about *my* room.'

"I was agreeably surprised to find two rooms very like the one below, only lower in the roof, separated by a passage, and containing, as Edwards said, very clean-looking beds; the curtains of which were of a thick, white linen cloth, worked all over with parrots and green leaves and cherries in bright coloured wor- steds, probably the same hand which had produced the chairs below. Large oaken chests afforded convenience either for holding clothes or as seats; for of chairs there were but two, and they were not of the most inviting shape or substance. One mirror, much defaced by flies and time, pended in such a manner from the wall as

to reflect dimly the top of the head; and one table, of the same dimensions as those below stairs, stood beneath it. Such was my toilette; not quite like that which I had been accustomed to at the Hall; but I quickly formed plans of improvement in the materials before me for constituting a more comfortable arrangement the next day; and altogether, I was agreeably surprised in the sort of abode which my uncle had taught me to expect, as being far more eligible than he had represented it to be. I was happy to find, in the room destined for him, a very easy chair, and I had brought his favourite footstool and a large velvet cushion, which I immediately placed in their respective stations; a piece of carpet too, that used to be under his writing-table, Edwards had not forgotten; and these minor objects of his accustomed comforts directly gave an air of old acquaintanceship to the apartment, with which I was sure he would feel pleased.

"Edwards and myself soon arranged all these matters; and I had the consolation of knowing that my uncle could not experience any personal inconvenience, or suffer in health, from the change he was now to undergo, in as far at least as outward circumstances went. You know, Alpinia, how he overvalues all that I do, and you may be sure these little attentions were not lost upon him.

"Such was our abode when we first entered it three weeks ago. It has gradually assumed a more luxurious appearance; for my piano and my uncle's flute have arrived, and several other pieces of furniture from Bristol, with many books; so that really, except that the Bentley Farm, as it is called, is not the Hall, I do not see what we could desire more in point of local comfort; but I will confess to you, nevertheless, that now the first business and bustle of arrangement have subsided, the calm into which we have sunk is not without its melancholy. Do what we may —turn, as one will, sorrow, I see, cannot be avoided altogether—perhaps it is not intended it should; I have been hitherto so happy, too happy! I did not know there could be any change; but the change is come. My dear uncle's countenance —that is the changed aspect which affects me most. There is some secret sorrow preying on him—else why should he have left his dearly loved home? and though I try to forget this, in order that I may be the better enabled to cheer him, still it is a consciousness which will not be expelled.

"The other night, as I sat by my uncle at work, I heard him sigh heavily, and then he arose and paced the room till he almost made me (who never knew what nerves were) grow nervous. The creaking of his shoes, the shuffling of his steps along the shining boards—how they irritated me! I wished to engage him in conversation, yet I felt that I had not a pleasant word to say; at last, I ventured to pronounce a wish that Colonel Pennington were with us, and began planning the possibility of finding room to lodge him. 'Ah, my dear one!' said my uncle, with a look of distress that pained me to the soul, 'I am sure you feel this loneliness is too much for you.' In vain, with my cheerful accents did I endeavour to dispel this idea. I saw it had gained possession of him, and the knowledge that his own feelings made him a stranger to mine, was a real trial to me. Fortunately, there are two little children, grandchildren to the proprietor of the farm, whom I have taken under my charge, and their innocent play makes a diversion to my uncle's thoughts, which is less intensely interesting to him than dwelling always upon me, and yet amuses and soothes him. I talked to him the other day of the returning spring, and of the delight I should have in tending the garden, and seeking for his favourite *violets:—but, alas!* every subject that I touch upon, has a reference to the past; *and when I endeavour to* avoid one thorn, I stumble on another.

"Frances has only written once to us since her marriage. She says she is very happy, and gives a splendid account of the gaieties at Belmont Castle. But I look in vain, for one word which would communicate a real feeling of happiness to my heart.

"This letter comes through my uncle's agent in town, to whom all his letters are directed; and as he does not wish his abode to be known, he desires me not to mention it, except to yourself. You will not therefore, if you please, speak or write of it to any person, which, but for this notice, you might accidentally have done.

"Write to me, and tell me every minute particular of your loved Heatherden. Your health, and all that concerns you, will interest me. My days are never long enough for the employments I have to fill them with, though I believe there is time enough, as well as a time for all things under the sun, did we so regulate our pleasures and duties as to give them their proper portions of attention; but we run on with one thing till it has usurped the due place of another; and thus it is, we say we have no time.

"I am sure of one thing, which is—that so long as God gives me health and my senses, I shall always find time to love and think of those most dear to me, among whom, my dear Alpinia, believe me you hold a chief place, for I am, in all sincerity, your very affectionate "EMILY LORIMER."

Miss Marian Macalpine, in answer to the foregoing:—

"My dear young leddy and friend—It was a heart's gladdening to me to see your hand o' writ, for I thought lang to hae tidings o' you and my honoured General. Praised be the Lord, that though ye 're under the cloud, there is no' that man, leeving nor dead, wha ever did or could, say aught against either o' ye, in *truth*: —Juke and let the jaw gae by and ye'll rise the prouder frae the deep waters o' ill men's tongues; no' a bit but it gies me a heart scad when I think o' the gude and the great being dispossessed o' their ain lands and tenements, while the ill-doing and the new-fangled ride it owr their heads: but ye hae the true Christian spirit, my dear Lady Emily; and thole the dule o' this warld wi' the meekness o' a weaned bairn. Doubtless ye 'll no' can miss ye 're reward.

"My Lady Frances's bridal must hae been a fine galantee show, and she 'll hae a gude tocher, and gin she conducts hersel' wise-like in the high station she has chosen, there's nathing to be said. 'Bode a gown o' gowd, and ye 'll get a sleeve o't,' they say; she has done that same, and has gotten sleeves and tail and a'. He 's a douce discreet lad, the Lord Bellamont, and seems on every haund likely to mak' her a gude husband; but Lady Frances was ever ta'en up wi' her ain beauty, and that's a thing winna bide, and afttimes lang ere it's awa, the flush and glamer o't is clean gane. Och hone! dautie, the beauty o' youth is like the sough o' the simmer wind, so that for the wear and tear o' every-day use, it 's o' little price.

"Really, Lady Emily, your account o' Bentley Farm was sae exact-like, that I could fancy mysel' sitting aside ye. Hech, sirs! gin I 'd but the penny siller, I 'd soon mak' out that same visit; but though, thanks to Lord Mowbray, I 'm a rich woman, biding in my ain bounds, I should soon na' hae a sark to my back, if I gaed wandering up and down the countrie side; but why canna ye come owr the muir among the heather, to bonnie Heatherden?—O! for a sight o' the General's *winsome countenance, and* your ain canty smile! I'd wager ony thing the General

would soon cease to be sae glum and melancholious-like, for there's no denying but changes are lightsome; and then there's no better cure for an ailing than to keep aye moving. The vera bustle and stramash o' a flitting, gars the bluid tingle again.

"I had sair work whan I cam' first till this place; forby, a' the thoughts o' lang syne which cam' over me like spirits o' the departed. No' a bit but I thought I heard the auld Lady Mowbray's voice craick, craiking in my lug, 'Marian, whaure 's my pillow? Marian, whaure 's my bag? Why are ye no' at the spinning o' the wearifu' booming-wheel?' Mony a saut tear has it gar'd me greet, whan I 'd far rather been out and after the blackberries or the rowan berries—or seeking the lint-white and the cushie doo's nest. And now, now that my time 's my ain, what use do I mak' o't? Keep me, but we 're pitifu' creturs at the vera best—girning at ae time for what we canna tell how to use at anither—shouldna this teach us to keep a calm seugh in our heads? Ye can weel conceive, my sweet Lady Emily, how sair a pang it cost me to part frae you and yours—and then it was an unco' tryal to come to thae parts. The days o' our youth! the days o' our youth! Had we a grip o' them back again, how different-like wad we use them; at least, so we think:—but wha can hinder the wind to blaw?—youth winna be guided. Yet this is no language for you:—troth and it sets you ill, my bonnie birdie, wha hae taen tent in youthfu' prime; and whan years hence, gin ye be spared, ye'll backward cast your ee, there 'll be no girnings o' conscience to rive your heart.

"Weel, aweel! here I am, wha hae outlived a' my ain kith and kin, and am my leefu' lane in this wearifu' warld! Yet still I hae mony blessings; and so lang as life's left, doubtless there is aye a meaning in 't. That 's what we ought to luke to:—pit a stout heart till a stey brae—and that will brake the neck o' a' our troubles. I pray for that same; and that every blessing may be showered upon the honest General, and your sweet sel', is the very hearty prayer o' your friend,

"MARIAN MACALPINE."

CHAPTER XXII.

For what admir'st thou? what transports thee so?
An outside? fair, no doubt, and worthy well
Thy cherishing, thy honouring, and thy love:
Not thy subjection. Weigh with her thyself;
Then value; ofttimes nothing profits more
Than self-esteem, grounded on just and right
Well-managed. Of that skill the more thou know'st,
The more she will acknowledge thee her head. *Paradise Lost.*

Soon after Lord Bellamont's marriage with Lady Frances, they went from Richmond to Godolphin Castle, where the Duke and a gay party of Lady Arabella's friends, as she called the fashionable group of idlers as assembled in that luxurious abode, were awaiting the *bride's arrival*, as the Queen of the Revels, and the dame of all

fashion *to be*, for the ensuing season in London. Here, then, opened the very first scene on which Lady Frances had calculated to play her destined part in the life she had purposed to lead; and here, accordingly, she made her debut in the very top of her bent.

She had married Lord Bellamont because he had a fine estate, was a gay gallant-looking young man, with a fine showy person, could supply her with all the paraphernalia of dress, jewels, and and equipage, in which she centered her principal ideas of happiness, and which could render her an object of envy to characters equally vain and heartless as her own. She had overlooked in her husband the more precious qualities of a warm, affectionate, and ingenuous disposition: or rather she had regarded these as mere tools, wherewith to work her own will, and obtain an absolute sway.

Lord Bellamont, on his part, had married *her*, *bona fide*, for red-hot love: but it was that sort of love which, though had it fallen on good ground it would have brought good fruit, yet falling as it did, it had no basis to rest upon, and preying ever on its own disappointment, withered away in process of time, and settled in a captiousness of temper which embittered his existence.

After a few weeks of married life, it chanced, on some trivial, every-day occurrence, that Lord Bellamont had occasion to cross Lady Frances's will. This he did in a gentle way, but it was not so received. "I never heard such nonsense!" cried Lady Frances, "but marriage is a hateful *métier* to which I must serve my apprenticeship before I shall know exactly how to set up for myself."

"Nay, Frances, love! speak not so childishly, so pettishly, so unbecomingly; you know how I love you."

"Yes, I do indeed, to my cost; you have just given me a specimen:—so childishly, indeed! It is you, my Lord, who are a child, pleased to tyrannize over your new bauble, a wife:" and she looked at him contemptuously, and left the room.

"Impertinent! foolish!" muttered Lord Bellamont, and was on the point of following her to vent his choler; but while he hesitated, his kindly feelings returned. "Perhaps it is I who am foolish," said he; "after all, why try her temper uselessly? why contradict her in a trifle? I will prove to her, at least, that if I am childish, I can have the gentleness of a child," and he flew after her, "Frances! dearest Frances, forgive me! I cannot bear to quarrel with you. Quarrel with *you*? impossible!—that will I never."

Lady Frances smiled; and though she smiled in disdain as he

pressed her to his honest heart, still she smiled, and he was pleased, if not satisfied.

So long as Godolphin Castle remained full of visitors, Lady Frances professed herself vastly well amused. Now and then she bantered Lord Bellamont upon his talents for playing the Celadon, saying,—"You must really, my dear Lord, learn some new part for the London boards, or we shall be the laughing-stock of all our acquaintance: besides, it is beneath your dignity to be following me about like my lap-dog. One of two things will infallibly be concluded; either that you are ridiculously jealous, or that I have by my conduct given you cause to suspect me. I leave you to draw the inference. But I need not say more; I am sure you could not bear to be put on a footing with that *souffre douleur*, Sir James Dashwood, who has gone about like a sick turtle-dove these last two years; or if *you* bore it, I could not bear it for you: positively I should die of shame or run away from you."

"Dear Frances, you are more amusing than any one," and the fond husband laughed faintly, and with a bad grace, while several other young men who were surrounding Lady Frances, laughed in good earnest at what they termed matrimonial sport, while Lady Frances joined in the mirth which she excited at her husband's expense. But when all opportunity of exercising this amiable talent failed, owing to the departure of every visitor from the Castle, Lady Frances sank into a quiescent state of torpor, which at first her husband hailed with delight, as he mistook it for the placid forerunner of domestic enjoyment. He now hoped to find the friend and counsellor in his wife, which he had looked to as the perfection of all rational comfort; and for that purpose, as they sat together over a large fire, she half asleep, he enjoying visions of homefelt felicity which were never to be realised, he took her passive hand and began detailing his project of passing a great part of the year in Carnarvonshire, in the beautiful place which his father had settled upon him on his marriage.

At this moment, the house-steward, followed by several footmen, came in with an enormous Christmas bowl, and various cates prepared for that rejoicing day, begging the young bride and bridegroom to honour his Grace's goodness to them by partaking of the ale brewed at Lord Bellamont's birth; he immediately complied, drank the old man's health, and to the mirth of the party below stairs, which so delighted them, that they roared out a "Long live Lady Frances and my Lord."

But when they requested her Ladyship, for luck's sake, to take a glass of the precious beverage, she turned away haughtily, saying even the smell of the thing made her sick; and they left the apartment with very different impressions of their lord and their lady. "I am sorry, Frances," said Lord Bellamont, "that you did not condescend to pretend to taste their ale; a small courtesy from persons in a higher station is considered as a favour, and the reverse is cruel to the humble, and impolitic in regard to yourself."

Lady Frances yawned; and stretching herself more languidly on her seat, declared she had not thought about it.

Lord Bellamont sighed and reverted again to his settling in the Welsh mountains. An immoveable fixedness of dissent overspread the expression of her countenance, but he construed this into passive acquiescence, and went on to speak of his hope of coming into Parliament at the next election. She raised herself on her chair at this declaration, and said with animation—"Right, my dear Bellamont, quite right!—a man of your consequence ought to be in Parliament." She repeated her words, laying a great emphasis on "*your consequence.*"

Lord Bellamont drew himself up, with a degree of self-complacency which showed itself in his countenance. Who is there without their foibles? But it is a pity—nay, it is an awful crime—when those we love best, and in whom we repose all our confidence, those who *should* love us most, make the discovery of these foibles turn to our undoing.

Lady Frances saw she had touched the master key—vanity, and after a short pause, added;—"I assure you, my love," (a term of endearment which she used sparingly)—"I do assure you, that you have been hitherto much too good and gentle for those you have to deal with; you have been quite the *ridicule* of all the young men of fashion of your own age, for being so completely under your papa's government. Take care, if you stick too close to my side, that they do not laugh at you next for being tied to your wife's apron-string."

Lord Bellamont coloured and bit his lip: touch him on the score of ridicule, and his naturally fine qualities, both of head and heart, were all put to confusion, till nature and reflection rallied them again. "Now, dear Bellamont," she continued, "when once you have a home of your own, and can live as you choose, without all those impertinent remarks which at present assail you every moment of the day, you will tacitly assert your own independence without

quarrelling.—Oh! I would not have you quarrel for the world; nothing so impolitic as quarrelling, and family quarrels the worst of all. Besides, it is wrong, altogether wrong!—but one need not for that reason suffer oneself to be led by the nose all the days of one's life. Remember, you are of age, and the place—what is it called?—with the Hottentot name, in Carmarthenshire—must be yours, as it is settled upon you: so that it is high time you should slip the leading-strings."

"Why, to say the truth," replied the young Lord, "I do believe I have been rather soft; but my father doated on me to such a degree! and the fact is, there was nobody I loved half so well as my own father till I knew you; for whatever may be his faults in the eyes of the world, he was always the best of parents to me, most kind, most indulgent!"

"Oh! doubtless," interrupted Lady Frances with a sneering tone of impatience, which she intended should be softened into one of acquiescence—"Oh, doubtless the Duke is the best man in the world! I do not mean to say any thing the least against him. All that I intended to remark was, that he plays the game of all fathers—likes to hold the reins of government in his hands, and forgets that you are no longer a child. And what ought you to do?—why play the part of all sons who are in their senses, to be sure! and show him that you remember your own rights. Do the thing decently and well; but get out of the go-cart as fast as you can. There was an instance, the other day, of the servile state you are living in, about that pack of fox-hounds you wanted to buy. Could any thing be more ridiculous than the Duke's preventing your making the purchase? except, indeed, your consenting not to make it."

"Ridiculous, Frances! do you really think so? Well, at all events I am deuced sorry I lost the dogs, for my gamekeeper says they were quite a bargain."

"I dare swear they were to him!" inwardly said Lady Frances. "Oh! I am sure of it!" (aloud); and there was a sort of twirl on her lip, which Lord Bellamont had never yet learnt to construe in the true sense of its expression. "At any rate, I must say I thought it monstrous good-humoured of you to be lectured into foregoing your wish to have them. Now you see, if we were settled in a home of our own, all this species of petty *surveillance* would end of itself, and we should be as gay as the sun. Your being in Parliament, my love, will give you an excellent pretext for taking a good house in town; and a man who is to act the part in life which you are born

to, and who possesses the talents which, without flattery, you possess, ought to take his own line in politics, and, indeed, in every thing else; for old people have such an odd view of things, and see every thing through their spectacles, *de travers*. They may have known the world before the flood, and made their own use of it too; but they cannot possibly know the world which exists now—I mean, the sort of world we should choose to live in. No! for pity's sake, let them enjoy themselves in their own way, and let us be very cordial and polite, and all that sort of thing; but do not let me have the mortification of seeing you laughed at by your cotemporaries."

"Really, my dear Frances, there may be some truth in all you say; I have been too soft, and I see my error. It has quite rendered my life a burthen to me." (Lord Bellamont had been the happiest of men till his wife assisted him to this discovery.) "Yes, Frances, you are my only friend; now, trusting to you, I shall indeed become a different creature!"

How unwittingly he prophesied his own fate! Once thoroughly imbued with the belief that he had been cozened, maltreated, despised as a child, he became unhappy, looked upon every thing his fond father proposed for his advantage with a jealous eye, and though this change was not worked at once, it was very rapid in its progress, and very fatal in its effect. At first, his intercourse with his parent became constrained, artificial, and disingenuous; till, by endeavouring to avoid the wholesome restraint of a loving father's salutary influence, he fell into the snare of a heartless, selfish, dissipated woman.

Whenever the Duke of Godolphin proposed any thing to Lady Frances which did not tally with her plans, she immediately said, "Oh! I am sure Lord Bellamont would not hear of such a thing! I should be happy to do whatever he chose; but I know him so well, my dear duke! He may not like to contradict you, but he will never bring himself to submit to the measure." Thus did an artful woman gradually and successfully loosen those filial ties which it ought to have been her pride, and would have proved her true happiness, to strengthen—and all for what? To run a course of unchecked dissipation.

Lord Bellamont naturally loved reading, and was desirous of improving his mind; but he had not that determined bias to study which could overcome all temptations of idleness and pleasure. His beautiful wife, for whom his passion was as yet unabated, could at any time put all his graver resolves to flight; and either by that *monkey's weapon ridicule*, or by the wiles of an amusing tongue, she

could, at any time, lure him from those pursuits which, had they once become habitual, she had wit enough to know would have rendered her own intentions abortive,—and have given that firmness to his character which was all it required to render him a truly valuable man.

During a long, and to Lady Frances an apparently interminable winter, Lord Bellamont passed all the time which was not spent with his wife, in the company of his gamekeeper in field sports. This man worshipped the rising sun, and foresaw that a much wider scope for peculation and misrule would lie open to him in the new reign, than he could venture on attempting to practise in the present. Every thing, therefore, connected with his province, was reported by him to his young lord, to be in a sad state. The kennels, the dogs, the horses, all were mismanaged; the whole was a poor shabby establishment compared to what a man of my Lord Bellamont's rank ought to have.

"His Grace is an old nobleman now," this man would say; "can't go into the field or look after these matters; 'tis a pity he don't give 'em up to your Lordship. Why, I declare there's Captain Lepel and Squire Carlton and Lord Newington, has all better nor we have. I declare some of these here gemmen as I went out with a month ago laughed at our turn out."

"That's too bad!" said Lord Bellamont, biting his lips.

After these and similar conversations, Lord Bellamont would return to Lady Frances, and complain that his hunting establishment was quite a subject of ridicule to all his friends. She would then assume a serious air, and say, "Ah! my dear Bellamont! believe me, though hitherto you have never had any real friend to tell you the truth, this ridicule attaches to you in a thousand ways besides that of dogs and horses. Cut the matter short, dear Bellamont! The election will take place very soon; doubtless you will come in; and then with a good establishment of your own, and surrounded by real friends, men of your own rank and age, you will no longer have all these petty *désagrémens* to contend with, which at present sour your temper, and in fact do place you in a ridiculous point of view."

"My dearest Frances! Yes, I shall always be happy while I have you to love me and to tell me the truth."

Notwithstanding all this fond weakness, Lord Bellamont, in every other respect, was not a foolish man. He was only on the point of becoming one by being misled, partly by his own passions; but his

chief danger lay in his fine-lady wife. They came to London. Lord Bellamont got into Parliament; and Lady Frances established herself in the Parliament of Ton. They were the gayest of the gay. They rose late; they drove their several ways; they occasionally were invited together to dinner, the only occasion in which it is thought decent for man and wife to be in each other's society. But when by unlucky chance there was no invitation out, no club for my Lord, no opera or ball for my Lady, then a *tête-à-tête* matrimonial, generally proved fatal to the enjoyment of both. It was too often passed in reproaches by the one party—in sneers by the other; or when mutual peace was kept, it was only by the stimulus of extreme entertainment, derived from some story of a recent explosion of some fashionable intrigue, which proved to Lady Frances a never-failing source of delightful conversation, and served her as the ground-work on which to erect visions (the only visions, to do her justice, in which she ever indulged,) of many fracas to come. On such occasions, she generally wound up the climax of her story by observing—"What a fool that woman was, to give up her position in the world for the nine days' love of any man!"

To this, Lord Bellamont would sometimes reply: "But you know the whole story was blown—she was discovered—she could not help it."

"Bah! there's just what makes me say she was a fool!—Do you think one cannot keep one's own secrets, whatever one may do with any body else's?"

"At that rate, Frances, a man would never be hung for forgery or murder; for nobody *intends* to be discovered in a crime."

"Oh! but there are a thousand persons interested in the detection of *those* crimes—scarcely ever more than one in that of the *venial* trespass of preferring some one else to one's husband!"—(she spoke laughingly.)

"Frances, it is no venial trespass," said Lord Bellamont, with some warmth; "it is the foundation of every wretchedness which exists upon earth."

"Nay, now, my dear Bellamont, I did but jest! One would think the case was your own, you take up the matter with such furious zeal. I wish Mr. Carlton, or Lepel, or Lord Newington, were here to hear you. They would say you were turned methodist or field preacher! Smooth your handsome brows, pray, or you'll frighten me!—Bless me! only conceive the ridicule which might attach to *your being so very touchy* upon these matters! Do you not think

they would cast a suspicious eye at me? Have a care, Bellamont: —nothing renders a man so truly ridiculous as jealousy."

"And nothing renders a woman so truly despicable as being a brazen coquette."

"Well, if you have nothing more agreeable to entertain me with than abuse, I wish you a good evening, for it is time to dress for the Opera."

That night, as Lord Bellamont sat in a box by himself, attending or seeming to attend to the stage, he beheld his wife opposite, with Lady Arabella Mellington, his sister, (for that Lady was now married to a man of Lady Frances's recommendation,) surrounded by coxcombs, and apparently wholly unconscious that he was remarking her; which, with the most painful feelings labouring in his breast, he was striving to do unobserved. At that moment Captain Lepel entered, accosting him with a "How goes it, Bellamont? Why, I never knew before that you were a connoisseur in music. I have been admiring you for some time past—you seem quite rapt in ecstasy."

"Not I," said Lord Bellamont, yawning affectedly; for, next to having it thought that he was watching his wife, his being caught in an ecstasy at any thing would have most highly discomposed him,— as by this time he was sufficiently advanced in the training of *ton* to have forfeited most things sooner than his diploma to being one of that exclusive community.

"You have been admiring *la Pasta*, then?" said Captain Lepel.

"Yes;—no—she's well enough!"

"What! I have not guessed right yet?—Your own wife, perhaps?"

"Oh! I leave you to do that!" replied Lord Bellamont, reddening, and biting his lip.

"And you do well, Bellamont," rejoined the coxcomb; "for whether you left the privilege or not, it is one I should most undoubtedly take, without your Lordship's leave."

"To be sure," replied Lord Bellamont sneeringly; "else wherefore live we in the land of fashion?" His Lordship however, by this audacity of his companion, was thrown off his guard, and spoke not in his made-up, drawling voice, but in his natural emphatic tone.

Captain Lepel saw through the whole truth at a glance; and argued rightly, that Lord Bellamont was just in the mode when

he might be the most easily played upon, and made to serve his turn. He therefore left off goading him; adroitly changed the subject; looked through his larquette round the house carelessly; declared there was not a soul in the boxes, though they were full to overflowing; and then said to Lord Bellamont—"Where do you sup to-night!"

"I don't know—I think I shall not sup. I have got a confounded head-ache. I shall go home."

"Pho! pho! Home! that's enough to give a man the head-ache at any time, not to drive it away; no, you are not come to that yet, I hope, Bellamont,—'tis the last resource of a poor Benedick; besides, I have just heard Carlton deliver an embassy from Mrs. Dashwood to Lady Bellamont, requesting her to sup with her, which invitation was accepted; you will therefore be a forlorn turtle-dove if you go home—quite a *Sir James*."

The recollection of what Lady Frances, his most able instructress, had once said to him on this subject, rushed to his remembrance, and his eyes flashing fire, he replied—"No, no, I am a mighty good sort of man, I believe, but not at all inclined to act the part of a turtle-dove."

"Well then, come with me and sup at Crockford's several of my friends will be there."

"But will you take me? for I have not my carriage to-night."

"By all means. Be in the lobby after the opera, and I shall be sure to find you." So saying, Captain Lepel left him to chew the cud of fashionable reflection.

It was now towards the end of the performance, and Lord Bellamont ventured to the box in which his wife was seated, having contrived a plausible excuse of having something to say to his sister. As he entered, one or two loungers rose like a parcel of scared birds, and departed. "Shall you want to be set down any where to-night, *love?*" said Lady Frances, addressing him. "As I am going to Mrs. Dashwood's supper, perhaps I can be of use to you."

Considering the terms on which they had parted, the word *love*, electrified the kind heart of Lord Bellamont; and had it been tacked to a request of going home, with what unmixed delight would he have hailed the affectionate proposal! Even as it was, he replied in his own endearing way—"Yes, if you will come home with me you will be of great use and comfort too, for I have a head-ache," (he might have added a heart-ache,) "and do not feel at all well. *Lepel asked me to sup* with him; but if you are inclined to do a

kind, dull thing, and go home instead, I shall infinitely prefer it."

"Dear!" exclaimed Lady Frances, with a look of indifference, "I am vastly sorry, but it is quite impossible. I have engaged myself to go with your sister to Mrs. Dashwood's, and she would be so very much affronted, after having promised her, if I did not go. Besides, it is a party made on purpose for me, quite our own set."

"On purpose for *you*," rejoined Lord Bellamont. "Ah, Frances! did you even know of it till you came to the Opera this night?"

Lady Frances coloured; for there are various reasons for colouring. Detection in a lie was one which never failed to call forth this amiable symptom of better feelings in Lady Frances's cheek. But she rallied suddenly, and said—"No, to be sure I did not, that is just the thing that makes it so very piquante. Mr. Carlton told me that Mrs. Dashwood had kept the whole thing a profound secret, on purpose to surprise me agreeably, though she has been thinking of nothing else these three days."

"In that case I think it is incumbent on me to go too," said Lord Bellamont, "only in common civility—so I shall be your escort."

"The Jealous Husband, a farce!" muttered Lady Frances, shrugging her shoulders.

At this juncture, Captain Lepel, Mr. Carlton, and several other men, entered the box. The two above-mentioned gentlemen inquired if they could be of any use in escorting the ladies to their carriages, the Opera being over, and the house nearly emptied.

"Certainly," said Lady Frances, taking Mr. Carlton's arm, while Lady Arabella accepted that of the other cavalier. The poor husband, Lord Bellamont, was left to walk out alone, with what satisfaction he might, after the manner of husbands.

True politeness is a beautiful polish; nay more, it is a valuable lustre on worth of character; for it is the offspring of good feeling, and good feeling cannot bear to give pain. Had there been a grain of it in Lady Frances's composition, she would not have borne that her husband should appear to be neglected, or be secondary, even for a moment, in her estimation, to any other human being; but had this observation been made to Lady Frances, she would have pleaded the customs of the world, the impossibility of doing, in such trivial circumstances, differently from other people; and a long et cetera of impertinent nothings, that only mean, "I am tired of my husband, and I wish he were tired of me—we have enough of each other at home." But this genuine good breeding, which has its source in the heart, deserves not to be named with that merely superficial manner

arising out of a selfish regard to personal indulgence or personal vanity.

Lord Bellamont at times felt all this, and even reflected upon it; but had not the courage to break through the flimsy veil of fashion, or disentangle himself at once from the toils into which he had fallen. If the fear of vice had been as strongly before his eyes as the fear of ridicule was, he might have saved himself and his wife from ruin. But on the night of the above described scene at the Opera, he felt obliged to Captain Lepel for whirling him away to Crockford's, where wine and vice silenced reflection, and where considerable losses at play completely deadened all other nobler cares.

At four in the morning, Lady Frances returned home, after a night passed partly in listening to the confidences of some licentious men, such as should have startled the delicate ear of a pure wife, and have made her feel herself sullied to have heard even by accident; but this, Lady Frances called "knowing the world;" and these men, who made her these degrading confidences were the first to boast of having done so, and to adduce them as proofs of the footing upon which they stood in her good graces. The rest of Lady Frances's mispent hours were yet worse employed, in lending a pleased attention to avowed admiration. The former she called talking to her friends—the latter a little innocent Flirtation. Had any one, who felt really interested in her, told her truth—she would have tossed her head in disdain, saying, she only did as every other young woman of fashion did.

On returning home, and entering her dressing-room, she asked her maid if Lord Bellamont was come home.

"No, my Lady."

"Oh! very well, that's right. What is the hour,—two o'clock?"

"Past four, my Lady," answered the poor sleepy maid.

"Remember, you are to say I came home at two o'clock—now don't forget—quick, undress me."

And without any thought of what a night may bring forth; without one sigh of repentance, or wish of amendment, she only endeavoured to lose the feverish excitement of her spirits, in order to be asleep before her husband came home, lest she should be disturbed by a curtain lecture.

One more scene will illustrate the progress of this too common history.—Days and weeks rolled on. The misery of married misery is, of all others, the most difficult to be borne: and the really amiable Lord Bellamont, from one fatal weakness, vanity, was degene-

rating fast into that wretched wight, a cross husband. He wanted the stability of character to be what Nature intended him to be, a truly estimable man, and he lost himself and his wife, for the sake—of what? of being called one of the ton. After a reconciliation which followed a violent storm of temper, in the course of which reproaches and recriminations and bursts of ill-humour on either side had carried the quarrel to its highest climax, Lord Bellamont was preparing to pass one evening of quiet comfort at home. He had procured many new baubles to delight his thankless wife. He had placed a luxurious seat, decorated with various cushions; had drawn around every object which could delight the taste, or amuse the fancy; had heaped works of imagination and of art on her table, and sat expecting her approach with loverlike impatience. At length the door opened; Lady Frances looked in at the door *en robe-de-chambre* saying, "What, Bellamont? not gone to dress yet!"

"Dress, my love! I thought you would excuse my making any more elaborate toilette to-night."

"I excuse you? what do you mean! This is Lady Ellingby's night, you know."

"The devil!" cried Lord Bellamont, rising with angry impatience and dashing down a favourite China vase;—"it is too bad, Madam; you are the arrantest gad-about—the most ungrateful woman, the most consummate flirt that ever——" and he stopped for want of breath.

"It is indeed too bad, Bellamont," replied Lady Frances in one of her mildest voices, "to hear you call me all these names. I am glad at least that no one else hears you; for you know what ridicule could attach to you. It is indeed too bad to see my beautiful vase broken to pieces; too bad to see a person of your consequence and of your education make such a fool of himself."

"'Sdeath! Madam, it is enough to try the temper of any husband to be tied to such a woman as you are; one who lives for the public, and who is strange only in her own house; who never performs a single duty; whose whole heart is centered in vanity. When a man, driven thus to desperation, does lose his temper, he in some degree becomes an object of contempt: I own he does; but if you had one grain of heart, one scruple of conscience, you, you who know *what* I suffer, and that my sufferings are occasioned by you, ought to be the last person who should taunt me with my infirmity. Your sister *Emily would never* have done so. No; she would never have acted *you have done.* She indeed *was* an angel."

"That, my Lord, is a perfection at which I never aimed. I have heard of angels upon earth; and whenever I have seen the creatures so called, I always thought them detestable. But if you remember, I never denied that Emily was not much better suited to you than I could be. You have both of you had a little sneaking kindness towards Methodism, and a sort of innocent lackadaisical taste which made you harmonize wonderfully. It is a great pity you did not marry her; you could have gone about correcting the world together from all their wicked ways."

"Too bad, by heavens!" exclaimed Lord Bellamont, walking about in a rage, while his wife in the same cold, collected tone went on with her tirade.

"As to myself, I always hated cant and prosing; I never should endure to lead a moping life; and because I confess this, and act upon it, you fly into a passion and call me all sorts of names. You have nobody to blame but yourself; you know you *would* do the deed, Bellamont; why; after having done it, render yourself ridiculous and make yourself the laughing-stock of the whole town, by showing that you repent it?"

"Ah! Frances, well do you know that such was not always your way of thinking; at least such were not always your declarations. You led me to suppose very differently of your character or you could not have deceived me. Have you no recollection of certain professions of being happy to live with me any where—to enter into my interests, and to promote my views! Instead of this, what have I found? A woman who lives for the world alone; whose every thought and wish seem at variance with domestic comfort. To love the world in reason, to enjoy its empty pleasures in moderation, is natural, and even may tend to the promotion of temporal interests; but to become the slave of it, to the dereliction of every duty and every feeling, is beneath a rational being."

"Why, my dear Bellamont, I never knew before that you were such an orator! Positively I shall expect on the next question in Parliament, to read Lord Bellamont's triumphant speech. Only joking apart, tell me what you wish me to do, and I will do it. But now only look at every other person of our own age and station in life, and observe if they do not lead exactly the same lives that we do. You know if one goes to one place, one must go to another; and without at all intending it, one thing comes after another, till every moment is engaged, and positively there is not time to stay at home. *But, love, if* you wish it, I will certainly send my excuse

to Lady Ellingsby's to-night; only, you know it is her last night this season, and we have never been once to her house; and besides, you know," (and she looked archly in her husband's countenance,) "what will become of poor Lady Dashwood, if *you* do not go? she depends on seeing you to-night, and I am sure you are too courteous a cavalier to have the heart to disappoint her."

"Lady Dashwood," replied Lord Bellamont, in rather a confused manner, "is a lady who always treats her husband with the greatest deference and respect, and nobody has a right to say a word against her."

"Against her? Oh, I am not so ill-humoured; I am pleading *for* her; besides, you know that she is *my friend;* it is I who introduced her to you. Come, come, Bellamont, go and dress for Lady Ellingsby's. Your eyes are remarkably brilliant; and, your toilette finished, you will be irresistible; whereas, if we stay here, looking at each other alone, it is ten to one but we shall revert to the subject of our little quarrel; whereas if we both go out, determined to be gay and agreeable, we shall in reality become so. Think only of Lady Dashwood——there now, already the sweet smile is playing around your lips."

"Nonsense, Frances," half yielding.

"Come, Bellamont, you know full well she *will* be there, and you are dying to go. I am sure I can forgive you a little innocent Flirtation; nothing I am so proud of as to see my husband admired *prôné, fêté,* by other women; and, you know, you have only to show yourself to secure this triumph."

Poor Lord Bellamont! his vanity and his soft heart were not proof against the insidious voice of flattery. Off they both went to dress; and a short time only elapsed ere they were in the brilliant well-lighted saloon of Lady Ellingsby. A buzz of admiration floated round the crowded room when they made their appearance; and Lord Bellamont forgot the wiser and more natural feelings which had depressed him, in the triumph of being the husband of a beautiful woman.

After the first homage of admiration had passed away, there were other beautiful women also who obtained *their* share; and, like every thing of the same evanescent nature, Lady Frances found the transport had subsided, and left her in quiet possession of her husband's arm much longer than suited her inclinations: she looked around the room in vain for Lady Dashwood—that lady was no-

where to be seen; and Lady Frances had recourse to all the ingenuity of her brain to unlink herself from her companion. He, on the contrary, really enjoyed an honest feeling of happiness. "Observe the decorations of this room, my dear Frances. This is something like what I should wish for your drawing-room a Llewellyn, in Caernarvonshire, only the hangings should be of a soberer hue, for the sake of the pictures; and then, you know, the old tapestry would look so admirably in the Ebony Hall."

"Oh! don't talk to me of tapestry; I hate it; with the great men wielding their scimitars, as though they would cut one's head off, and the goggle-eyed princesses kneeling to them. Oh, you make me shudder to think of it!"

"Well, dear Frances, your own suite of apartments shall be fitted up entirely in your own way."

"You are very good," (yawning); "but in that savage country, that horrid desert, it does not much signify how any thing is fitted up: no taste to comment on, no eyes to see. In short, 'where none are beaux, 'tis vain to be a belle.'"

"Then you count my eyes for nothing?"

"Ah, ah, ah!" with an affected laugh; "a husband's eyes looking through the spectacles of matrimony—you cannot count *them* for eyes. Why, my dear Bellamont, we see each other all day long, and all night long. We must want a little variety, you know."

"Would to Heaven we did see each other as constantly as you describe! but since we have been in London, count up, I pray you, the hours we have spent alone together, and you will find how few they have been; or if an evening has surprised us in each other's company, owing to the fatigue of past dissipation, or a preparatory beauty rest, for that which was to come, you have fallen asleep, and left me to commune with my own melancholy reflections. Frances, is this at it *should* be? Is this as you promised, and wrote it *would* be?"

He might have gone on some time longer, had not Lady Frances replied, yawning through the sticks of her fan, "Mercy on me! a curtain lecture in public! besides, I believe, if I went to sleep once, you have four times:" and again she yawned.

"You are tired, I am afraid," said Lord Bellamont with a sigh!

"Yes—no—that is to say, a sort of pain in my back—really this is a very stupid place after all; nobody one knows here—such *a set!*"

"Well then, Frances, if you find no amusement, I am sure I do not: shall we return home?"

"Oh! as Lady Dashwood is not here, you find it mighty dull, I suppose."

"Have a care, Frances, I could retort; but we are overheard. Let us be gone; I will call our carriage;" and he went out for that purpose.

Just at that moment, Mr. Carlton entered the room, and coming up to Lady Frances, as though she were the only person in the apartment worthy of being spoken to by him,—"Ah, by all the loves and graces," he exclaimed, "what good fortune to find you here, Lady Frances! why I did not know you were in town. You are like Mahomet's tomb, never to be seen by the sons of men:" and he fixed his rude gaze of effrontery on her person.

Lady Frances coloured, moved on her tip-toes in a sort of dancing fashion, tossed her head about, and played off divers and sundry airs. The pain in the back was forgotten; the yawning languor discarded, and a pleased animation overspread her features. "And pray, Mr. Carlton, may I ask where you have been? with Dian and her nymphs awaking Echo, no doubt; in plain English, hunting and shooting with dogs and gamekeepers. Well, I am glad you are tired of that at last. I do not care if a man takes a little inspiring field-exercise, but there may be too much of it."

"There is always too much of any thing which keeps me from admiring your bright eyes: such an air, such taste, how you are dressed! Well, certainly, there is nothing like you; and that ornament in your head-dress—how exquisite! But I see Bellamont's face coming towards you: upon my honour, it is not fair, this monopoly; it is perfectly ridiculous; he is quite a rustic; we must teach him better manners. What does he mean by locking you up and following you about like your shadow? why we must all make league against such tyranny. Lepel, come and assist me; a joust, a tournay, a feat of arms, is to be performed here; we must break a lance with Bellamont, and rush to the rescue of a persecuted fair one."

So saying, several coxcombs clustered round Lady Frances, who stood, nothing loth, simpering and pronouncing monosyllables which might be construed any way. "Locked up! Dear me! no—not locked up: I am always riding, or driving, or walking. It *is your own fault* if you don't see me:" and she looked significantly *at Mr. Carlton.*

"That's true enough," whispered Lady Clara Reeves to another envious old maid who was listening with curious ears to the incense offered up at a shrine that she never had called her own, and inveighing against yielding to temptations wherewith she had never been tempted.

"Frances," said Lord Bellamont, his fine, tall, commanding figure towering above the insignificants who surrounded her, "the carriage waits."

"Come, don't be so very young," whispered Mr. Carlton in her ear, as he observed she was about to obey the summons. "What? you are afraid of a curtain lecture! well, I thought you had been a cleverer person than not to know how to put an end to such torment."

"I am not inclined, Lord Bellamont, to go home yet," was her reply: "but pray do not put yourself to inconvenience for me—take the carriage and" (looking about the room, her eye sparkled as she caught Lady Dashwood's figure), "there's *my* friend Lady Dashwood just come in, *she* will set me home."

"I am glad to see you have recovered your fatigue," said Lord Bellamont, turning away, pale and mortified, as Lady Frances passed him to go to her friend.

"When a man is married to a flirt of a wife," observed Mr. Altamont to Mrs. Neville, who happened to have witnessed this scene, "how very easy it is for her to place him in an awkward and ridiculous point of view."

"Well, to be sure, it is beyond belief how Lord Bellamont can suffer it. He certainly wants proper spirit, and he is not only losing his own happiness, but his wife's character; hunch! hunch! it never will turn out well—never; they must both come to misery!"

"Only observe," said Mr. Altamont, with melancholy discernment, "the great intimacy which appears now to subsist between Lady Frances and Lady Dashwood. See how, she talks to that latter Lady; but the friendship of such women is hollowness." And could Mr. Altamont have overheard that conversation, how indignantly would he have remarked upon its tenour, and how easily have foretold its end.

"My dear Lady Dashwood," said Lady Frances, flying up to her and whispering in her ear, "how delighted I am to see you—why there was nothing in the room one could endure to look at, of female kind, before you came in. You know, Lady Ellingsby is a *grave gone-by sort of* personage—nothing but a few wits and old-

fashioned dowagers ever come here. I wonder what brought me, only you know it is so dull to stay at home, and poor Bellamont does get so tired when he has no place to go to; but now you are come, you are such a favourite, that all will seem delightful to him. I am so charmed that he should be under such a good influence as yours," she continued, assuming a face of proper matronly interest in her husband's welfare; "for really he has a vastly good heart, and does not at all, as some people suppose, want for sense; but, you know, before he married, he never lived in the world; that is to say, what is really to be called the world; and I am quite grieved to see that he hardly knows any young men of his own rank in life, and this gives him such a forsaken appearance. Do, my dear friend, discipline him a little, if you please, and he will become a different creature under your tuition."

"I would do any thing in the world for you, my dearest Lady Frances," replied Lady Dashwood; and with a tender look of intelligence they separated, to play their several games.

Lady Dashwood accosted Lord Bellamont with a "Well, Lord Bellamont, to be sure you have reason to be proud of Lady Frances —how very much more handsome she is than any one else! I declare I think she looks better this year than she did the last."

"Do you really think so?" said Lord Bellamont, affecting indifference.

"Yes, I do; and, if you were not her husband, you would think so too; but you know you are in love with her, nevertheless: obsolete as the idea is of being in love with one's wife. You see, I can read your heart."

"You can do any thing you wish, doubtless," replied Lord Bellamont; "but if you read my heart once, I am sure you will never do so again, for you will only read such a melancholy page, as will fill you with *ennui*."

"You astonish and grieve me. Miserable! Lord Bellamont, miserable!" (with a look in which tenderness and sorrow were blended) "Who than can be happy? I am astonished—shocked beyond measure; but if it is any consolation to you to pour out your sorrows in the ear of a true friend confide in me. We are observed; our conversation is too *suivie* for public society; call on me to-morrow morning; I shall be alone; and with what interest shall I receive your confidence!" Then, speaking aloud to some third person who was a little way off, she remarked, "Dear me what has happened to Lady Frances's head-dress! Mr. Carlton seems to be

undertaking the trade of coiffeur: did you ever see any thing so graceful, Lord Bellamont, as the manner in which Lady Frances bends her head while he is arranging her diamond aigrette, which she has just dropped."

"Disgraceful!" muttered Lord Bellamont in her ear, thrown off his guard by jealousy.

"My dear friend, you are irritable to-night," was her reply. "To-morrow we will talk quietly, trust me; but do not show this temper of mind to the world; it will be too happy to have you for a laughing stock."

From this fatal night, the web was drawn close around Lord Bellamont which was to entangle him to his undoing. It were fruitless, it were degrading, to go through all the art Lady Dashwood too successfully planned and practised to win him to her purposes. She explained in a mysterious way why she had not invited him to her supper; and at last insinuated that his company was so dangerous to her peace, that she had avoided him as carefully as his society was sought by every other woman. Now, however, when she saw him unhappy, she could not think of herself; she could only endeavour to mitigate his sufferings. When he spoke to her of the views of domestic happiness which he had entertained, and of their total overthrow, she pretended to be exceedingly shocked. "To be sure," Lady Dashwood said, "Lady Frances was a woman who always seemed made for the world, and one might have expected that she would not exactly *filer le parfait amour* by the fireside—but then with such an inamorato! She might at least have——"

"Oh!" interrupted Lord Bellamont, "I did not expect her to be a recluse—but never, never to be happy at home!"

"It is, to be sure, rather too bad," said Lady Dashwood. "Ah! if she only knew what a treasure she possesses. But——"

"You are very kind, my dear friend," said Lod Bellamont.

And now followed a long course of instruction as to the means he should pursue to reclaim her, and the methods he should adopt to rescue his own mind from painful comtemplations. As to the first, she assured him, that all attempts to assert his right as a husband to forbid her leading the life she did, could only draw down upon himself the ridicule of the world. "It is always better," she said, "to leave these things to correct themselves. As to the latter," she added, "I, you know, am a sort of Mentor from which *you must endure to hear* harsh truths." Among other specious ad-

vice, she warned him of the dangers of play, an excitement to which, though originally averse, and long indifferent, he had recourse, as people swallow spirits or opium to silence their conscience. "A little harmless ombre or bassette in good society," she would say, "cannot tend to any derangement of fortune. But that horrid club!—those blacklegs—those sharpers. Do not, my dear Lord, trust yourself to their manœuvres. At my house, you will always find a party ready to while away a few hours, where you will at the same time be safe."

Thus the whole iniquitous train was laid, and took effect, which was to plunge Lord Bellamont in disgrace and ruin; and his own wife was the original promoter of the scheme, not perhaps with a full insight into its ultimate issue, but from the wicked and weak intention of running herself a career of thoughtless and unchecked dissipation.

CHAPTER XXII.

O Nature! a' thy shews and forms
To feeling, pensive hearts have charms,
Whether the summer kindly warms
Wi' life an' light,
Or winter howls in gusty storms
The lang dark night. BURNS.

How differently had the winter months passed over Lady Emily and General Montgomery in their retirement, and with what a contrast of feelings did they hail the return of spring! Even during the intense rigours of a severe winter, Lady Emily still found a beauty in the landscape: for Nature is never dead to eyes accustomed to read her aright; and the dashing through the spray of a snowy path, the delicate fretwork of frost on the fibres of trees and plants, the pureness of the air, and the cerulean tint of the sky, with the dark colour of the broad Severn, were pleasures and beauties to be admired and tasted by Lady Emily even in wintry hours. The sounds of distant rustic labour or merriment that were borne distinctly through the clear and rarified atmosphere, gave animation and cheerfulness to the otherwise sombre landscape: they told of the vicinage of human being; and surely utter solitude, however sublime, cannot long be grateful to the heart of social man. They

told of the business, the cares, the delight of fellow-creatures, and were circumstances which added a lively interest to the scene.

In addition to these, how many pleasing objects rewarded Lady Emily's tasteful eyes in and about their humble dwelling—objects which were all the offspring of her industry and exertion, and thus their value was enhanced tenfold. Her refined perception and enjoyment of beautiful things, took a wide range through the whole province of the endless regions of taste. The comforts and even elegancies of furniture with which she had adorned the interior of their dwelling, were chiefly wrought by her own hand. The blush of early flowers which thickly enamelled the garden, were literally the result of her own culture; the early lilac which perfumed the apartment had been cherished by her through the severity of winter, and coaxed into premature bloom, to surprise her uncle, and make him forget the loss of his forcing-houses, or only remember them in order to prove that all things may be supplied by care and love; and chiefly, and above all, the joy she experienced at placing his favourite bunch of violets on his table, could not be compared with that which gold or jewels can afford.

From these innocent but evanescent delights, she turned with other sentiments of graver satisfaction to the orphans whom she had converted, not into fine lady playthings, but into tidy, active, useful children, so gentle, so well suited to fill their sphere in life with credit and comfort, that they were living proofs, not only of the endowments of her refined taste, but of her solid understanding; and bore testimony that these qualities are not necessarily incompatible, although they frequently are disjoined.

During the long winter nights, Lady Emily alternately plied her needle, or read aloud to the General, or sang to him his favourite songs; and as they retired to rest every night, when he kissed and blessed her, she regularly said, from her inmost heart—"Thank God for a day of happiness!"

Under her sweet influence, the General regained his serenity, and sometimes even shared in the pleasure she took in her garden; helped her to part the roots of her polyanthuses (which she called her stationary butterflies, likening their velvet flowers to the mealy wings of those insects), and smiling delightedly at the eager interest with which she invested the simplest pleasures; but still there was a canker in his heart's core, which could not be cast out altogether, till a higher power removed it thence. The only diversity which *varied the nature of* their employments and pursuits, was a letter

now and then from Heatherden, and, in the course of the winter, about four from Lady Frances. These latter were dry and formal letters, with which there was nothing to find fault, but much to dislike, considering *from* whom they came, and *to* whom they were addressed. Their perusal never failed to sadden Lady Emily, and to cast a deeper gloom on the General's brow. There were other letters, too, received by General Montgomery, which he always retired to read, and the contents of which Lady Emily knew were not to be imparted to her: although her almost filial solicitude for her dear uncle rendered this a cruel trial to her, yet she forebore to take any notice of a circumstance, in which at present, she was convinced, she could be of no use.

Winter had now completely passed away. The first snow-drop, the first crocus, nay even the last tuft of primroses that had bloomed by the unchained spring, were gone. Already the infancy of flowers had lapsed into their childhood; and the violet flung its rich fragrance far and wide upon the vagrant breeze. Once, again, the green spike of the corn waived upon the upland, the lark once again turned his aspiring minstrelsy high poized in air; while the throstle, and the blackbird with its golden beak, sought the lanes and hollows, busying themselves in forming habitations for their young, amid the fencing thorns of the pink-budded hawthorn.

After a long ramble one afternoon, when Lady Emily had climbed the highest uplands which overlook the Severn, she felt fatigued, and sat down to enjoy the delightful rest which follows exertion, by the side of one of those fresh welling springs which burst from the bosom of the earth, as though they were spirits of life and gladness endowed with power to cherish and adorn the lands through which they hold their fertilizing course; and as she contemplated its bright and gurgling waters, she felt the language which thus spake in their silent eloquence; and then, as her eyes wandered far off over the sea-like Severn, a sudden vision flashed before her fancy of the Dorsetshire coast, of the last year's Spring, and of her first interview with Lord Mowbray. Nature itself seemed to hold up the mirror to her, which reflected the circumstances as vividly, as though she saw them in reality.

"Ah!" she said, sighing, "those *were* happy days, happier than the present; but we are not to ask *why* the former days were better than these, for we do not reason wisely concerning these things. Oh! no, not wisely; but the heart will sometimes rebel, and will unawares lift us as it were out of ourselves, and carry us back to

past scenes, to linger there precisely where we had better not pause one moment."

Thus did Lady Emily mingle reason with feeling; but the remembrance of her first interview with Lord Mowbray could not, would not, be effaced. The vagrant hat which he redeemed; her amusement in seeing it fly over hedge and dale, eluding his pursuit; their subsequent acquaintance; their growing intimacy; the little mystery of the fording the streamlet, too rudely and too soon disclosed—all these, together with a distinct recollection of the air, the mein, the tone of voice, of him whom she imagined held no longer any place in her remembrance, rushed over with a subduing power, and chained her back to all the pleasures, and all the pains of memory.

Not that Lady Emily had never thought of Lord Mowbray till now. Oh, no—he had, after her first quitting London, too constantly and too painfully occupied her mind. She had blamed, and exonerated him alternately in regard to his conduct towards herself, and she had but too carefully taken note in her heart's tablet of every gesture, every look, every half-broken expression, which had implied a history of sentiments and whole chronicles of feelings. With the aid, however, of mortified pride, that delicate pride of the heart's first purity which

"Would be wooed and not unsought be won,"

she had sedulously stifled and veiled these intruding thoughts, till she supposed them banished for ever; but there are attachments, indigenous as it were to the human heart, which, like that of certain plants to particular spots, after they are cut off and dug out root and branch, will throw forth suckers from some hidden fibres as tenacious of the soil as though they had remained the cherished tenants of the ground, and been suffered to form themselves into gigantic trees. Where these exist, they may be repelled, crushed, torn, mutilated, defaced; but they will adhere to their position while the breath of life remains, destined, perhaps, to flourish hereafter.

Certain it is, that a vision of Lord Mowbray stood before Lady Emily, as vividly portrayed as though some wizard had evoked it on purpose to trouble that serenity which she had so wisely endeavoured to attain; and by the time she reached her home, she was as languid and fatigued as though she had walked beyond her strength. In vain she endeavoured to rally herself from this overcoming and unreasonable depression, and to talk to her uncle cheerfully of the *beauty of the season and the* scene. Her wits wandered; her words

did not flow naturally; and General Montgomery once or twice asked her if she were not well. To dispel this his anxiety, she proposed to read him his favourite Evelyn's "Sylva;" she fixed her eyes on the page, and her thoughts floating any where rather than engaged on her actual employment, she wondered why the history of her dear forest tribes no longer possessed the power to interest, or rivet her attention. Still she continued to read, and she saw that the inquiring glances which her uncle sent forth from time to time on her countenance, became less frequent, as the quiet music of her voice soothed him into the belief, that whatever had occurred to agitate her, had subsided; and under this impression, he suffered himself to be beguiled into his afternoon's slumber.

When he dropped asleep, Lady Emily paused; but observing him about to awake she resumed her book, and, with patient pertinacity, courted the soundness of his slumber by continuing, in her ringdove murmuring voice, to read on, till she was startled by hearing a rustling among the leaves of the woodbine that encircled the window. At the same moment, her favourite greyhound startled from its cushion, and, rushing furiously towards the spot, leaped on the table which stood beneath the casement, barking loudly.

The General awoke; Lady Emily laid aside her book, and, running to the door, called in considerable alarm to their servant Edwards to know if any stranger had approached their dwelling, when she recollected with some anxiety that he had that day gone to Bristol. At the same moment, she found herself running against a person whose well-known voice thrilled to her very soul; and the next instant Lord Mowbray himself advanced, apologizing for his abrupt intrusion. "It is indeed," he said, "I fear, almost inadmissible to haven taken such a liberty, but I met Edwards by chance in Bristol;" (he blushed as he spoke;) "and learning from him that Lady Emily and you, my dear Sir, were living so near, I could not resist the pleasure of making these inquiries in person: may I hope to be pardoned?"

General Montgomery's manner in a moment dispelled any fears he might have entertained of not being a welcome visitor; and a glance that he stole at Lady Emily, although it did not speak security of welcome, still satisfied him that he was at least no indifferent person. After the first agitation and surprise of meeting had passed away, each party recovered their composure, and soon *felt as though* they had never been separated.

There is a linking affinity in some souls which makes them unite,

after absence, as though they had been unnaturally severed, and belonged of right to each others' society and communion. Thus it was with the present circle. Lord Mowbray's peculiar gentleness of manner, the winning tone of his voice, were in consonnance with the General's tastes; and as he spoke of things, not of people, of interests and not of events, of thoughts and feelings, not of the news of the day, there was no reference made to harsh or grating subjects; no idle cloven-foot of curiosity peeping out, to offend or hurt General Montgomery's feelings, but all that could interest and soothe him.

Once, when Lady Emily inquired for her sister, Lord Mowbray looked distressed; said that London was so wide a place that persons might live in it years and never meet; that he had gone little into that gay world in which Lady Frances lived; and that he really had hardly ever seen her. But General Montgomery was not deceived by this evasive answer—his countenance was overcast, and a pause ensued in the hitherto delightful conversation.

Lord Mowbray first resumed the discourse by observing that he had made an unconscionably long visit, and must now take his leave, although to him the moments had gone by so agreeably, that he had forgotten they might not be similarly computed by others; and he ventured to steal one of his soft pleading glances at Lady Emily, whose heart shone in her radiant countenance, as she replied, that she was sure her uncle had been much gratified by his remembrance of them; "and I——:" she stopped, hesitated, and taking up some violets that lay on the table, seemed to imply, that had she uttered her sentiments, they would have been of the sweetest import.

It was thus, as least, that the delighted Lord Mowbray interpreted her confusion; and, as if in haste to prevent any regular cold compliment of usage from lips unpractised in insincerity, but perhaps obliged, in conformity with custom, to veil the real impulse of her heart, he hastened to thank her with his eloquent eyes, while he said—"And now I have a boon to prefer, which I must venture to make known before I go; although I have its success so much at heart, that I really feel considerable dismay, lest it should meet a refusal."

Lady Emily's heart beat high; and she moved to a little distance, and busied herself in arranging some books, in order to avoid observation. The General made an encouraging reply, and Lord Mowbray proceeded to request that Lady Emily and her uncle would do him the honour of coming to pass some time at Mowbray Castle. "*I have,*" *he said,* "endeavoured to render it not wholly unworthy

of such guests; and there are some wild scenes along the coast, which, to a lover of picturesque and bold landscape, would not, I flatter myself, be devoid of interest. Our trees, indeed, we cannot boast of; still, in narrow sheltered gorges there is some wood; and my gardens are, I hope, not despicable, considering that they are only of a year's cultivation."

The General seemed rather pleased with the proposal; still he did not entirely accept or decline the invitation; and as Lord Mowbray was pressing his suit with earnestness, Edwards entered, and whispered to the former that it had come on a sad rainy night, and "would it not be better if my Lord would put up with such accommodation as the farm afforded, instead of returning to Clifton through the wet?"

"Well thought of, Edwards," said General Montgomery. "I had already settled that point in my own mind. Certainly we will not suffer Lord Mowbray to leave us to-night, if he will allow us to constrain him to remain. I am afraid he will not find his apartment very commodious, but——"

"Oh! as to that, any apartment here will be delightful."

The word delight escaped him ere he was aware; superlatives he did not deal in—"*Car la parole est toujours reprimée quand le sujet surmonte le disant*"—and he endeavoured to do it away, by adding, "the luxury of my room is not what I ever regard; but I fear I shall be troublesome, and—I am obliged, indeed I am, to return."

"Nay, now, my good Lord," said General Montgomery, "not obliged *positively*, I hope; let me persuade you to stay. Emily, join your entreaties to mine."

"Do, Lord Mowbray, stay," said Lady Emily timidly, "and see the improvements we have made about this place by daylight. It was a mere farm-house when we came to it. I shall be proud to show you what a little industry can effect."

"And well she may; for indeed, my Lord, my niece is my guardian angel, who makes every place a Paradise with her smiles and her sweet content. You will not, I trust, refuse to see some specimens of her art, by remaining with us at least to-night."

It may be guessed that Lord Mowbray yielded to his own wishes, and to his friends' entreaties; and it was settled to the satisfaction of all parties that he should remain at the farm.

And now, how gay appeared the heavy pattering of the rain, and how very cheerful was the increased lowering of the skies,

which seemed to bespeak the impossibility of turning out even an enemy to its inclement influence! It is the sun within the breast, whose shining or withdrawing beams gladden or depress our hearts, and even change seasons and scenes to our moral mental view.

As the General's composure and confidence in Lord Mowbray's society were confirmed, he ventured to ask after old acquaintances and friends; for he felt an inward security that he would not presume upon their intimacy, or make such questions an excuse for prying rudely into the cause of his present situation, or, in fine, touch upon any point which might wound his feelings. He inquired, therefore, with great apparent interest, of Mrs. Neville, of Mr. Altamont, of Lady Glassington, of Colonel Pennington. The only one of our friends who seem not to have forgotten us, yourself, my Lord, excepted, has been Miss Macalpine; she writes frequently to my niece."

"Oh!" replied Lord Mowbray, "I too have several capital letters from that good lady. She has not certainly studied Madame de Sevigné's art in vain, although she has perfectly preserved her own originality. To tell the truth, at a first reading I do not always understand her letters; but, after due consideration, there is ever some leading point which guides me to her meaning, and that meaning is well worth taking trouble to get at."

"Yes," said General Montgomery, "I have ever thought, that whatever is devoid of affectation, and at the same time is full of matter, must be always interesting, and such are truly the characteristics of our worthy Alpinia's letters."

Lady Emily added a word of warmer commendation, and they all felt that each one seemed inclined to like and be pleased with what was approved of by the other.

In this perfect harmony of thoughts and feelings, the evening passed on winged hours; and Edwards having sent for Le Brun, who arrived with his Lord's luggage, he found himself established, as it were, once more under General Montgomery's roof, not as a mere passing guest, but as though he were one of the family. Pleasure, like pain, will banish sleep; and Lord Mowbray, under the consciousness of extreme happiness, passed as restless and feverish a night as though sorrow had strewn thorns on his pillow. Even happiness pays the penalty of its *human* nature; and beyond the even tenour of a peaceful consciousness of rectitude, there is no transport here below which does not, in its extreme, tend to pain.

Lady Emily on her part was not less agitated by the thousand pleasurable and vague imaginations which floated before her—but with this difference, no cloud of self-reproach whatever, beyond such imperfections as attach to all mortals, cast its shadow across her path—no past regrets for hours mispent, or affections misdirected, or promises broken, threw its imperfection upon the tissue of the silken web she wove. Still there was too much of trembling anxiety, too much of eager hope, to allow her the calm possession of herself. When she opened one of her good books, as was her usual custom every night, in order to compose her thoughts before she knelt in prayer, she found it difficult to sober them sufficiently to be able to follow the sense of the page, and then she said—"Oh! if happiness is thus to unfit me for duty, what would grief not do? and, as my good uncle has often said to me—'wretched is that being who is too happy or too miserable to lift his thoughts in prayer to Heaven.' Ought I not to fear, that if I prove thus unworthy of felicity it will be taken from me? How dare I hope for its continuance, if I am thus dazzled by its approach?"

Nor did she reason thus in vain: for, with the earnest desire of deserving the blessing, the power of doing so returned; and then sweet indeed became the chastened purity of that happiness which subsided in gentle and refreshing slumbers.

When Lord Mowbray arose the next morning, his senses were greeted with the fragrance of the sweet brier and the song of the birds, together with all those sounds of rustic life which, though they speak of industry and labour, come not to the ear with the money-getting avidity which the cries of a populous city awaken in the mind. Lord Mowbray felt lightened to have escaped from these, and invigorated by the air of heaven, which blew refreshingly into his room. A brilliant sun illumined the drops which hung upon the leaves, the only vestiges of the last night's storm; and he felt his heart bounding with a joyousness from the consciousness of an upright and definite purpose to which he had long been a stranger—indeed, which he had never before truly known: for, whatever enchantment resides in scenes of beauty, or in the powers of fascination, there is no true peace when the principle from whence that enchantment and that fascination spring, is not in itself pure and steadfast; when it does not tend to some ultimate end, which is sanctioned by virtue, and followed up perseveringly. The thought of his own errors led to such reflections as these, while the salutary compunction of conscience smote him to the heart, and overshadowed the brightness of

the present moment, but only did so to render him more deserving of recalling it hereafter.

It may be easily guessed that Lord Mowbray did not go away the next day—nor the next. General Montgomery really could not part with him; and Lady Emily's eyes said as much at least twenty times in the day. Then came long walks and rides, on such ponies or horses as the country afforded; and there was the delight of scrambling up and down difficult passes, and over bad roads, and of running and leaping lightly across some difficult step, ere Lord Mowbray could tender his assistance.

In Lady Emily, the gaiety of youthful spirits was united to the most perfect feminine gentleness; and to this rare union of seemingly contradictory graces, were superadded those richer treasures of mind which fade not with youth, but carry on their blessed influence into all the details of common life, the unenchanted regions of reality, the trials of sickness, and the depression of advancing years. These charms formed a combination of vivid interest around the very atmosphere of Lady Emily, which made a deeper impression every succeeding hour on Lord Mowbray's heart.

At such times as her absence left the General and Lord Mowbray alone together, the former found in his companion an attentive listener to his praises of his niece, a theme on which he was never weary of descanting; and with what deep and heartfelt interest did the latter attend to minute accounts of all she had effected, and all she intended to effect for the amelioration of the state of such persons as it was in her power to serve, for the improvement of the farm on which they resided, and for the benefit of its proprietor. "I assure you, my dear Lord, that where my skill and knowledge in agriculture have been of the smallest service, Emily's unwearying assiduity has effected twice as much; and the children she has had under her tuition, are living proofs of what a female mind can do when it is directed by sound sense. She is indeed, my dear Lord, a creature of a most felicitous nature, and may truly be said to be

> 'Blest with a temper whose unclouded ray
> Can make to-morrow cheerful as to-day.'"

Lord Mowbray's eyes glistened through a tear of rapture as he replied—"You are to be envied, General, in the possession of so rich a treasure"—and he sighed deeply.

Several days elapsed, yet still the parting day was always postponed; at length Lord Mowbray, with an agitation and earnestness

that could not be misunderstood, intreated the General to lend a favourable ear to his invitation, and to allow him to be himself their escort to Mowbray Castle.

"What say you, Emily love, to my Lord's proposal?" asked the General: "methinks it were uncourteous longer to resist a request so graciously preferred. You shall decide the question, my dear niece;—there, Lord Mowbray, plead your own suit."

"I dare not," he said tremulously.

"Oh!" cried Lady Emily, putting aside her harp, and coming towards him, surely you are convinced that if my dear uncle's health permit him to undertake the journey, it will give me the greatest pleasure to accompany him."

"That is really most gracious and most sweet," rejoined Lord Mowbray; "and you will promise then, Lady Emily, to confer this favour on me?"

"The favour, I am sure," said General Montgomery, "is mutual, my dear Lord; and I can only say, that for my own part I know no other person alive to whose house I should feel inclined to go. Little did I think, ten days past, that I should leave this abode to visit any where; but we are very ignorant of what a day may bring forth. Pleasure and pain are dealt out to us, in measures and at seasons we little dream of, by a Power whose wisdom we dare not question; and if the latter is to be received with resignation, the other surely should be welcomed with gladness. Let us then prepare gaily for our agreeable excursion, and lose no time in doing so. Do you, my Lord, name the day for our departure, and we will give orders to have all things in readiness."

"Well then, General, will the day after to-morrow be too soon? perhaps Lady Emily may not—"

"Not at all," replied General Montgomery; "delays are dangerous; besides an old soldier is always ready, you know; and my Emily never made me wait one moment for any frivolous female paraphernalia. You can be ready, love, can you not?"

"Oh! in an hour's time if you wish it, dear uncle."

The ordering horses, procuring a carriage, and various other arrangements, were, however, necessarily to be made; and filled up the intervening hours which preceded that of their departure.

"Do you know," observed Lady Emily to Lord Mowbray, as they walked round her little garden, the last evening of their sojourn at the farm—"do you know, though I have the greatest pleasure in *accompanying* my uncle to your castle, I shall leave this place with

regret; for though I was, I confess, very melancholy when I first arrived, yet I have enjoyed so many tranquil, happy hours that I shall think I am leaving a friend when I go away; besides, there is always a doubt what I shall think when I return here: the place probably will be the same; but shall I be the same?"

She asked this question in the innocence of her heart, and with an expression of doubting interest, as she looked in Lord Mowbray's countenance, which was to his feelings singularly enchanting.

"To my idea," he said, "you cannot change for the better; I trust, therefore, that you will not be changed."

She laughed, and replied, "You know not what you say, my Lord. Consider how short a time you have been acquainted with me; how can you know my real character?"

"Short! Lady Emily! Ay, short in one sense of the word—but long, very long, in another. Do you know, Lady Emily, that a year has elapsed since I first saw you? Then there is another way of computing time, an indescribable intuitive sense of feeling that one has been intimately acquainted all one's life. Such is my feeling in regard to you. I hope it is not presumptuous. Does the remembrance of our first interview ever return to your mind, for from mine it has never been absent?"

"Yes, I remember it well; my hat gave you a vast deal of trouble; but you caught it at last."

Lord Mowbray knew well enough that Lady Emily attached no other meaning to these words than that which they implied; yet, falling on his ear, they thrilled through every vein with a sensation of foreboding happiness impossible to describe. They seemed to him to be oracular; and the "you caught it at last," was murmured by him that night as he fell asleep on his pillow.

Change of scene, argue as we may in behalf of constancy of attachment to localities, is invigorating to the moral, mental, and physical constitution of our being. It is like the new potting of plants, which droop a little at first on being disturbed, but imbibe a fresh portion of vitality afterwards. General Montgomery's whole being evinced the truth of this observation; for, in the progress of their journey, he returned to his own original serenity and cheerfulness; and Lady Emily observed, with a satisfaction which enhanced her own pleasure, that the cause of his depression of spirits, whatever it might be, seemed for the time obliterated.

As for Lord Mowbray, he was a different creature, and seemed to have *cast off the slough* of despondency and querulousness which

had marred the graces of his higher qualities. All that had been cynical or questionable in his manner or conversation had given place to an openness and cordiality to all around him, which set off his character in a new and captivating point of view; nor was this change lost on General Montgomery, who remarked it to his niece.

They arrived at Mowbray Castle by moonlight, but one of those very bright moonlights which give the greatest interest to scenery, and precisely that species of interest suited to the peculiarity of the place. The mystery of shadow, the grandeur of a broad flood of light, lying like a mantle of glory on the ocean, and touching the outlines of the building with a delicate tracery of silver,—Lady Emily saw all these, and made an exclamation of surprise. "Why you had not prepared us for any thing so sublime," said General Montgomery. "I knew the coast was bold, and the ocean is always fine; but here is a combination of objects calculated to strike the beholder with admiration."

"If you had seen this place a year ago, my dear General, I flatter myself you would have given me some credit for the improvements I have adopted in and about the Castle. The site, indeed, was made to my hand, and I had every reason to be satisfied with it in its majesty of desolate grandeur; but the building was going to decay, the roads were almost impassable, and the whole scene was more calculated for a castle in romance, than an abode of comfort in real life. I flatter myself, also, that the moral state of my tenantry is considerably amended, and that I have not quite so questionable a crew around me as there were on my first arrival here; for I have good reason to believe that this place was little better than a rendezvous for smugglers, who were considerably disturbed by my making it an habitual residence."

"Ah! my good Lord," replied the General, "if great landed proprietors were conscientious lords and guardians of the domains assigned to them by Providence, there would be much less temptation or opportunity for nefarious practices, and much more powerful stimulus to industry; for the natural circumstances arising out of the presence and daily life of a gentleman residing on his estate would give bread to thousands who otherwise become the scourge and refuse of the land."

"Yes," said Lord Mowbray, "and a temporary hasty visit now and then will not do; it is the mutual interchange of benefits between the different classes of society; the habit and intimacy, so to express myself, which exist between a man and his tenantry, which produce that kindly attachment so beneficial to the true interests of

both, and for which there is no substitute. These ties are loosened, and in time wholly lost, if constant presence does not maintain their vigour."

"I agree with you, my dear Lord; woe be to that woman, who, for any selfish views of gratification whatever, induces her husband to forego his true interest, and makes him lose his dignity and his consequence by neglecting the duties of his station; and miserable is that man who, from ease of temper, or the fatal rust of indolent habit, suffers himself to be so blinded, so misled. He will awake to feel his insignificance when it is too late, or sink into utter oblivion, and drop into an unhonoured grave."

"Surely," said Lady Emily, "there are not many such; for it is so natural to love what is one's own; and I cannot understand a wife's not being delighted to evince her attachment by following her husband wherever his interests may call him."

The General shook his head with a mournful smile, saying—"There is such a thing as selfishness in the world, though you know it not, my Emily."

"I have always," replied Lord Mowbray, "regarded it as the most criminal conduct to neglect the birthplace of one's ancestors. It is like quitting the post that is assigned to us, and leaving it a defenceless prey to the enemy; and it delights me to hear that Lady Emily is of my opinion."

The General appeared distressed by the turn the conversation had now taken, and turned away to hide his emotion.

After the first arrival of the party at the Castle, the arrangements for the guests being finally made, and their comfort and pleasure carefully provided for, General Montgomery and his niece felt that the delicate solicitude of Lord Mowbray to render them at home in his house, did really effect that most difficult of all purposes; for even where the intention is perfectly genuine and sincere, it is rare indeed but that the too little or too much of pains, does not defeat its own intention. In the present instance, this was not the case. The General's apartment was contiguous to Lady Emily's, and somewhat apart from the rest of the Castle, in a wing that extended along the edge of the highest part of the rocks, in the latter of which a terrace was formed, that was sheltered by hardy evergreens, and decorated with a profusion of flowers. From the window of Lady Emily's dressing-room, there were steps leading to this delightful walk; and the General and his niece might here conceive themselves

to be as completely retired from the main building as though they had been miles away from it.

It was impossible that General Montgomery should not be impressed with the delicate and unwearied assiduity of Lord Mowbray to render his sojourn in his house delightful, and he appeared really to have recovered his former self; while the many opportunities afforded to Lady Emily of becoming more intimately acquainted with Lord Mowbray's amiable qualities, the exhaustless stores of his intellectual powers, and the endearing consciousness of their being entirely devoted to her and to her happiness, confirmed and justified that growing attachment which had, since their first acquaintance, been an unknown inmate in her breast. In this state of things, time passed through its wonted evolutions of hours, days, and weeks, unheeded, but left traces of its flight in which the happiness of the parties was deeply involved.

The many walks and rides about the coast afforded new interest every day to their rambles, had any other been required than that which they derived from themselves; but perhaps none of the scenes, however fine, conveyed half the pleasure to Lady Emily as did the open upland where she had first seen the lord of the domain, and where she now found a very beautiful building erected, commanding an extensive prospect, and containing within its walls a fresco of no mean merit, where the incident it was intended to commemorate was treated with a tasteful and masterly hand.

Lady Emily uttered an exclamation of delighted surprise on seeing this decided proof of remembrance, and she felt that confusion of happiness which seeks refuge in silence. "You are not displeased," said Lord Mowbray, "I trust you are not?"

"*You know* I am not," was the smiling, soft reply. And at that moment the General, having alighted from his horse, entered the pavilion; and, while he admired the whole building, his attention was quickly drawn to the fresco.

"Ah! what have we here?" said he, holding up his hand to shade his eyes from the light; "this is indeed an uncommon work of art in our country; this breathes of other climes: I think, my Lord, it is not difficult to guess the wizard who has conveyed the treasure here;" and then, having descanted on its beauties, he added, "Do you know, I think there is a resemblance to Emily in that female figure."

"*I must* have had a felicitous inspiration, indeed," replied Lord

Mowbray, "if such is really the case; perhaps there is something in the air, but a copy must not be looked at by the side of an original. That is hardly fair, you know; so, if you please, General, we will resume our ride."

The General had not so forgotten past times as not to feel there was a little mystery lurking in this story, and he was too tender, too delicate, to unfold it rudely; so these three happy persons continued their morning rambles, in their own delight enjoying the happiness reflected from each other.

On their return to the Castle, they were equally surprised and pleased to find Colonel Pennington, whose figure it was impossible to mistake, enjoying his favourite amusement, looking through a spying-glass at some vessels in the offing. In the first moment of recognition, smiles and welcomes alone prevailed; but suddenly the General's brow was overcast, as he remembered that never once had his friend written to inquire for him, or made any attempt to see him, since they had parted at Montgomery Hall: this fact was too painful to the General's heart to be passed by as a circumstance of indifferent moment. "Well, Pennington," said he, "I do confess I did not think you had been the man to remind me of the truth of the old proverb, 'Out of sight out of mind,' you seem glad enough to see us now at Mowbray Castle: but at Bentley Farm——"

"And how the deuce was I to know you were at Bentley Farm? who ever heard of the place, or was to imagine you had gone hiding yourself about the country? Why, if I had not cross-questioned your agent, I might never have found you out at all; as it is, I have had a pretty wild-goose chase after you, and when I reached the farm, you were flown. I *have* found you, however, at last, and I have business of some moment to converse with you about; therefore——"

"Nay, now, my dear Colonel, a truce with business till after dinner," said Lord Mowbray; "come in and look about you, and take some rest, and allow General Montgomery to do so likewise."

Lord Mowbray obtained this forbearance from the Colonel with considerable difficulty; but the dinner proved more silent, and far less agreeable, than any which had taken place previously at the Castle. The General was evidently depressed, the Colonel big with some business which hardly allowed him to swallow down a few hasty mouthfuls, and his audible sighs interrupted all Lady Emily's endeavours to restore the wonted sunshine of the party. Lord Mowbray *too felt distressed.* He knew not what to think, or to what

cause to attribute the dejection and agitation of his guests, but was conscious that the strange unaccountable behaviour of Colonel Pennington infected him likewise with gloom.

The fine sunset of a spring evening invited the party to go out on the terrace, and the Colonel having seized General Montgomery's arm, walked him away at a quick pace to a bench at the farther end of the parapet, and there sitting down, requested him to lend him his serious attention. The General bowed his head in token of assent, and the following colloquy took place. "General, pardon my abruptness, but you are a disgraced man! Yes, Sir, disgraced for ever, unless you declare to the world publicly the truth of the history of the Mask."

"Pennington, I thought you had given me your word never to mention this subject to me again; and I regard it as an affront and a breach of friendship that you do so: from any other man breathing except yourself, I would resent it as an insult never to be overlooked."

The General made a movement to rise. "Nay, General," cried his friendly persecutor, "you stir not," holding him forcibly down, "till you have heard me." And he proceeded: "You may bear quietly to be called a murderer, and because you do not hear the words, suppose you are an honourable man, with an unsullied name; but I—I will not bear it for you."

"What mean you, Pennington?"

"Mean? why I mean what I say. There is not a society in London where the mysterious affair of General Montgomery's adventure with the Mask has not been talked over; not an impertinent gossip who has not bewailed Lady Emily's hard fate, saying, 'Well, I am sorry for the poor thing; how is she fallen from her high estate! it is, to be sure, a sad misfortune to be the niece and ward of a man to whom a crime of so deep a dye is imputed:' 'Poor thing! she's blasted for life,' adds another: 'No man will think of marrying her,' says a third, looking with delight at his four unmarried daughters, and thinking there is one rival out of the way. 'Lady Frances is well out of the scrape. How fortunate she was! but you see even the good-natured Lord Bellamont avoids all communication with General Montgomery.' Then another group of people came up to the last speaker to inquire the meaning of the words they caught imperfectly; the story is repeated, and loses nothing in the repetition; the fact of the disappearance of the Mask is averred to be true, and I have been appealed to,—yes, I, your friend, bursting with indignation, and uttering execrations and defiance in

their teeth, have been called upon to disprove the fact, if I could—think of that, General, *if I could?* Then I have been pitied alternately, and commended for being so staunch a friend; laughed at and sneered at by others, as being an injudicious partizan, whose very violence and zeal defeated their own end. Yes, Sir, all this is true, and all this have I borne with what patience you may guess;—nay, I challenged one man for his insolence, and he absolutely refused to accept my challenge, and assigned as a reason, he saw no necessity for committing one murder, because another had been perpetrated. There, General, there's for you! and here you are as unconcerned as though this question were not one of vital interest, as though your honour were not attacked, and as though the happiness of every individual who loves you were not implicated in this tremendous accusation!"

"Softly, Pennington; moderate, I beseech you, this intemperate language which I know flows from a kind and honourable motive, but which it is impossible for me to hear any longer. I have mastered *my* feelings sufficiently to listen to you with outward composure: I think you may subdue *yours* so as to attend to my reply. What you have related to me shocks and wounds me—how deeply, I leave your own breast to tell you, but it does not *appal* me. I have long foreseen, that a man who falls from his position in life would become the scoff and prey of the malevolent and idle, and I am prepared to bear the ignominy with which I am branded; but should it even be the occasion of my death, as I believe it will, mine is a secret which must for ever lie buried in my grave. I thank you for all you have done; I thank you for all you have felt for me; but the evil is irremediable and must be met with firmness and resignation."

"What! and do you intend," cried Colonel Pennington, rising into fresh indignation,—"do you intend to drag down your innocent niece into the pit where you are so calmly contented to fall yourself? Do you intend to cover all those with the reflection of your disgrace, who love and honour you;—yes, honour you in despite of all appearances?—do you mean to do this, when by a word you might (for I am sure you might) dispel at once the accusation with which you stand implicated?—remember, General, that I tell you for the last time, that by this obstinacy you forfeit all right to have a friend!"

"My good, noble-hearted Pennington, I acknowledge the apparent justice of your reasoning; but I solemnly repeat, that under the existing circumstances which bind me to secrecy, I would sooner, far *sooner, die, than* disclose the transactions of that dreadful night.

Yet, since the cruel world has so judged me, I will not involve in my own ruin those dearer to me than myself. I shall inform Emily of all you have communicated to me, and as soon as I can collect my thoughts sufficiently to arrange my plans, I will look out for some eligible protection for her, and then stand forth alone and unaided to abide the storm, rage as it may. Lord Mowbray, I had hoped, might have been—but now that is over!—Poor, dear, angelic Emily!—No, no, Lord Mowbray too must be made acquainted with the subject of your discourse; he too must learn to look at me with doubt and suspicion. The task be mine, Pennington, to make this disclosure."

"What!" cried the Colonel, starting to his feet, and once again arresting the General, as he was walking away: "hold—hold! what, a man criminate himself! why, the law itself does not demand that of you, or of any one; keep your own counsel as long as you can; but, oh! it will too soon follow you; the dreadful story will too soon follow you, wherever you go—" and away stalked the Colonel, swinging his arms, and muttering to himself like one half distracted.

"Excellent creature!" ejaculated the General, as he looked after him; "but his sufferings are light, when compared in the balance with mine own."

At this moment, Lady Emily came forward to meet him, with a joyous bounding step. "Summer is now really come," she said, as she took her uncle's arm, "and every thing looks beautiful and gay." Her eyes for the first time reverted from the landscape she was drawing, to rest on her uncle's countenance, and there she read how cruelly misplaced her observation was; when, suddenly catching the reflection of his sorrow, she added, "but not so if any thing has grieved you. My dearest Sir, speak! you are not well! or some sad tidings!—What of Frances,—tell me, I beseech you, what has happened?"

"Nothing of your sister, my Emily—nothing of her, rest assured, only a renewed impression of a dormant sorrow; and it is necessary, my dearest and best, that you should be acquainted with the cause, although it is an additional tax upon my fortitude to cloud the innocent joy of your feelings by the disclosure of mine."

"Tell me, dearest uncle, tell me quickly, I conjure you. Whatever it is, I may perhaps lighten, by sharing your grief—at all events, let me share it."

"*Well, Emily,* come to your apartment, and hear the melancholy *th I have to impart.*"

They walked in silence across the terrace and entered the house. Lord Mowbray, who had followed them with his eyes, saw in the perturbed gesticulations of Colonel Pennington, and in the altered looks of Lady Emily and her uncle, as they passed him, that some event of no pleasurable kind had occurred. He retired, therefore, with an anxious mind to ruminate upon this sudden change. The uncle and the niece meanwhile were seated in their apartment, side by side; the General's hand fondly pressed in Lady Emily's, and her eyes riveted on his countenance. "Now, dearest Sir, I am all attention, all anxiety; tell me, oh tell me!"

"Be composed, my love, and listen to me attentively; do not suffer your feelings to induce you to give a hasty or decided answer, which you might afterwards repent of, and then think it necessary to adhere to because it had been given from a point of mistaken honour; but allow your own good sense to act, and I shall be sure, in that case, that you will not form a wrong determination."

The General here detailed to her every thing that the Colonel had said to him; recapitulated the story of the mask, and aggravated rather than softened the picture which he drew of the suspicions which attached to himself, and which by no insinuation whatever did he attempt to clear away.

Lady Emily sat the very picture of attentive interest; her colour varying, her eyes now sparkling with indignation, now suffused with tears, as the General spoke of his own irremediable disgrace, and of his misery in regard to that which it might cast upon every one connected with him by ties of consanguinity or friendship.

"Remember," he said, "my Emily, that when you made your election, and followed me in comparative poverty and retirement, you did not subject yourself to a *certainty* of contumely or reflected dishonour. Now, dearest, the whole terrible truth stands naked to our view; why should I fear to pronounce that accusation which I am not afraid to brave? It is the deed, and not its name, which in every case should make us tremble. If you follow me now, you follow one who is accused of being a murderer!"

Several times, during the long and agonizing details made by General Montgomery, Lady Emily attempted to speak; but he stopped her, by earnestly beseeching she would give him a patient attention till he had said all; and she obeyed, though it was pain and grief to her.

When at last he paused and awaited her answer, she began in a tremulous tone, which acquired firmness as she continued speaking.

"Dearest uncle, I seek not to penetrate your secret; far be it from me to suffer one impulse of prying curiosity to evince the least distrust in you. I respect your wishes and obey your orders in this as in all else, and am happy to be able to prove that my affection for you is steadfast, my confidence unbounded. The only personal pain I suffer is, that you for one instant should doubt my duty and my love. Under every circumstance, under every privation, I again repeat, that I will follow you over the world—you, whom I consider as my father, I will tend you in sickness, wait upon you in health, and so that I am not parted from you, I shall never think myself quite miserable, never think myself a useless, worthless being, so long as I can in the slightest degree contribute to your comfort; but to leave you, to be sent away from you——" and she knelt and embraced his knees as she spoke; "I implore you, my dearest uncle, to promise me that that shall never be."

At first the General could not reply, save by folding her in his arms. At length, when he regained composure, he said, in a voice still suffocated by emotion—"This is the last time I will ever offend you by a single doubt, the last trial I will ever make of your unshaken constancy and affection. You have loved me through good report and through evil report; you have, in the green and blossoming time of life, borne the shock of a tempest unmoved, that has uptorn many a long-rooted friendship of the growth of years. You have sacrificed all selfish advantages and pleasures in behalf of affectionate duty. You are a pearl of precious price, and fit jewel for a monarch's throne, or, what is better still, for the domestic happiness and honour of a good man's home."

This eulogium, which Lady Emily's heart and conscience could not but confirm, fell upon her ear like the sweetest music; and the uncle and the niece were at this moment happier, more completely blessed in each other, and in that perfect faith of true and pure affection, mutually entertained, than had they been gifted with all the world deems great or prosperous, and had never known adversity.

"It is now become necessary that we leave this place," resumed the General, "and indeed, to take a note from that source whence all wisdom flows, it might have been wise, without this imperative reason, to remember the advice of 'Withdraw thy foot from thy neighbour's house, lest he weary of thee, and so hate thee.' But whether this be the case in the present instance, or not, the information of Pennington leaves us no choice; our own humble dwelling is our only fit place of refuge. We will not, therefore, linger,

dearest and best, or pause upon that which we know to be our duty; to-morrow we will quit Mowbray Castle. I am grieved thus to abridge you of a pleasure, poor dear child! the only one you are likely to enjoy during my lifetime; but you will be rewarded for all this self-denial, I am sure you will."

"I am, I am rewarded!" cried Lady Emily, tenderly kissing his hand, and they parted, happy in the confidence of mutual affection.

As Lady Emily had several arrangements to make, and her spirits had undergone a great shock, she felt that it would be necessary to pass the remainder of her evening alone, in order to make those necessary preparations for departure which devolved entirely on her; she therefore sent her apology to her uncle for not re-appearing in the drawing-room.

By the time these preparations were completed, she was completely worn out, yet not sufficiently composed to retire to rest. The excitement of the last hours, which had borne her up, as it were, above herself, had now subsided, and left her in that languid state of exhausted depression which is unfavourable to sleep. She continued to sit musing by her open window, which led down by a few steps to the terrace; she inhaled the freshness of the sea air, impregnated with the perfume of the flower-beds over which it passed, and which had been cultivated with care to decorate that *particular terrace*, more than any of the others by which the Castle was surrounded. Casting her eyes upwards, Lady Emily gazed on the myriads of stars which appeared leading forth other trains of lesser stars, and her thoughts were borne up to that infinity, from the contemplation of which the mind sinks, inadequate to its aspirings, but yet sublimed and purified from the trifling cares of its mortal career. The anguish occasioned by the recent disclosure of her uncle, the melancholy forebodings of her imagination, and even the pain of leaving Mowbray Castle, were all melted into one serious, tranquillized feeling, which rested with perfect trust and confidence in the mercy of Providence.

Thus placid and resigned, she thought a few turns in the open air would complete this frame of mind, and, wrapping her shawl about her, she stepped out on the balcony; but, for a moment, was deterred from proceeding by the sound of footsteps, which seemed to tread cautiously behind the window which projected in that part of the building, and prevented her from ascertaining the fact, had any one been there; but then again she listened, and all was silent. "If my fancy did not deceive me," she said to herself, "it is only some

of the stable-people, who have been later out than they ought, and have been passing this way to avoid being seen. How foolish I was to be afraid!" she continued, half aloud; and walked on, delighting in the sullen solemnity of the quiet but heavy waves breaking in awful monotony of sound upon the shelly strand beneath. The objects before her, viewed through the uncertainty of starlight, appeared more vast and more mysterious from the broad depth of the shadows cast from the impending rocks.

Tempted by the interest of the scene, and the melancholy idea that she was perhaps gazing at it for the last time, she descended the steep path, cut in the rock, which conducted to the shore, and having reached the sands, she turned to admire the effect of the lights passing to and fro from the windows in the Castle, now high above her, when she was startled by the sound of a distant gun that reverberated along the shore; but recollecting that this was no uncommon occurrence, as the passing vessels frequently fired signals, she directed her eye to the spot whence the sound had proceeded, and thought she saw a small brig sailing in the dimness of the distance. She felt no farther alarm, and continued to stroll on the beach, when a second gun was fired, and at the same moment a sharp whistle, which seemed close at her ear, made her quickly seek, with trembling steps, to return towards the path which conducted to the Castle.

Suddenly she felt herself rudely seized by a man habited like a sailor, who rushed upon her, while, at the same moment, a handkerchief was held close to her mouth, and she was desired not to attempt to scream or struggle, as it would be useless; and if she were quiet, no harm whatever would happen to her. Indescribable and hopeless terror effected that which was desired of her, and she was borne away to a boat that lay concealed in a cove behind some rocks, in which other men were stationed. Hitherto Lady Emily's surprise and horror had prevented her making the least resistance; and the man who carried her, supposing she had fainted, placed her for a moment on the ground, while he caught a rope flung to him from his companions, in order to haul the boat nearer the shore; at this instant, with admirable presence of mind, Lady Emily leaped up, and with the swiftness of an arrow flew towards the steps leading to the Castle, crying in a loud voice for help:—a light figure, whom she recognized to be Lord Mowbray's, at that instant sprang forward, and leaped on the strand:—"Save me!" she cried, and *dropped senseless* in his arms.

Her pursuers at the same moment rushed upon her defender,

and with a heavy laden bludgeon one of them dealt him a stroke, which, had it fallen upon his head, must have proved fatal; but it missed its aim, and only struck the shoulder of that arm which supported Lady Emily: as it fell powerless by his side, he caught her with dexterous activity upon the other. While struggling merely to hold her from the grasp of the ruffian who attempted to tear her from him, he must have been overcome, had not some person darted down behind them and fired upon his opponent. One groan, succeeded by a heavy fall, told what effect the shot had taken; and, at the same moment, various domestics appearing with flambeaux at the top of the rock, and descending the pathway rapidly with loud shouts, terrified any other of these desperadoes who might have been engaged in the villainous transaction, while the sound of the quick stroke of oars made known that they had already eluded pursuit. The same person who saved Lord Mowbray's life darted forwards and fired at the boat; the fire was returned, but fortunately the retreating tide which bore the guilty beyond reach of danger, saved the innocent on shore.

Colonel Pennington and the General by this time arrived at the spot where this sudden but awful transaction had taken place; and their exclamations of alarm, mingled with inquiries, produced a scene of confusion which rendered it perfectly impossible, for a considerable time, to ascertain what had happened. The apparently lifeless body of Lady Emily; the speechless agony of Lord Mowbray, who had never resigned his precious burthen; the clamorous demands of Colonel Pennington to be informed of the cause of all this dismay, and the touching despair of General Montgomery, combined to complete the painful interest of the hour. Lady Emily, however, began to recover from her swoon, and she was the first person to be sufficiently collected to narrate what had befallen her. "To Lord Mowbray," she said, "I am indebted for my rescue. Oh! my dear uncle, how shall we be ever able to repay him?"

"I am more than repaid at this moment," he answered; "now that I see you safe, now that I hear your voice."

"But yourself, my dear Lord," cried General Montgomery, "how fares it with you? are you hurt? you speak very faintly."

"I received a blow in my right arm, which pains me for the moment, but it will not be a matter of any consequence, only it might have disabled me from rescuing Lady Emily, had not fortunately some brave fellow come to my assistance. Where is

he, that I may reward and thank him, as I am bound in gratitude to do?"

"Who saved Lord Mowbray? who saved my Lord?" cried many voices.

"It was I who had the luck to save his honour," cried one, who was modestly standing at some distance from the group, but now came forward. "Does not your Lordship remember Ben Hardy, whom you were so good as to get into the excise? and a blessing on you for that same—and I hopes as how your Lordship has not been badly hurt, though it was such a deadly blow, I thought it must have broken your arm."

"Broken! is Lord Mowbray's arm broken?" cried Lady Emily, and she burst into tears.

"Not so, not so," whispered Lord Mowbray in her ear; and tenderly pressing her to his heart, for he had not yet relinquished supporting her with his one uninjured arm—"I feel no pain, I cannot be materially hurt, I am completely blessed."

"Why do we all stand talking here?" said Colonel Pennington, when the only thing to do, in order to ascertain the extent of Lord Mowbray's hurt, is to convey him quickly to the Castle, and then to save ourselves from catching our death of cold too; come, let us be gone. Ben Hardy also must come and tell us all he knows of this mysterious business."

Lady Emily declared herself quite well and able to walk; but when Lord Mowbray attempted to move, extreme agony prevented him. He was obliged to consent to be carried by his attendants. He was immediately conveyed to his chamber, a surgeon was sent for, and while the proper remedies were applied to his arm, the rest of the party were talking over the event.

Ben Hardy recounted that it was by mere accident he found himself on the spot, at the precise moment when his services were of such consequence. "Ah!" said General Montgomery, "rather say by the blessing of Providence. The accidents, as they are thoughtlessly called, have a high commission; but proceed."

"Why, General, you see, I frequently skulk about the shore at odd hours, to know if all's right, and I had lately some suspicion that a party of smugglers were at their old trade thereabouts; a vessel plying to and fro, much of the cut of one of their luggers, and a few signals, with an odd gun heard now and then o' nights, *kept me on the* alert, and I always takes care to be well armed, and *so I need to be.* Well, I was going my rounds here along shore, as

luck would have it, when I hears one of them there guns fired: thinks I, my lads, there's more as know your ways than you thinks for. You been't popping in that there fashion for nothing; you have a boat's crew, I guess, here, or hereabouts; and with that, I lays to under the shade of the rocks just by, where Lady Emily came running along like a hunted deer, when my Lord sprang to her assistance, and then my pistols served me in good stead; and my eyes being used to see in the dark, I fired over Lord Mowbray's head, just as the fellow was about to take a second aim. I winged him, and for the matter o' that, I thank God I did; for I not only saved his honour's life, but made a good riddance of the biggest villain that ever stepped."

"Do you know, then, who he was?" asked Colonel Pennington.

"Yes, I know'd him well enough—a smoothtongued rascal; it was he that they called the Gentle Shepherd, but he was a wolf in sheep's clothing; fearful things has he done with his tiger's smile; but Ben Hardy has done for him; he's off to Davy's Locker, and not till he served his time to that same master neither. I have shot a man afore now in battle, and it has given me a kick in the heart; but I vow I'd ha' taken that fellow's life if he'd had nine on 'em, and never have flinched."

"But it could not have been those smugglers who were so eager to carry off Lady Emily," observed Colonel Pennington; "the story does not bear itself out: I don't understand it."

"If I may be so bold, your honour, as to contradict you—I don't know that, for they might have thought to have got a great ransom for restoring the young Lady; such things has been done afore now on these coasts."

"Dreadful thought!" cried the General: "how fervent is my gratitude that this misfortune was spared me!"

"Humph!" said the Colonel with a groan, "it might have been an ugly affair enough; but tell me," he asked, addressing Lady Emily, "what business had you to go a star-gazing at the dead of night, young lady? those sort of vagaries never end in good. If you had been where you ought, namely, in bed, you would have been free from all danger. I do not approve of any of those romantic walks at undue hours; no good ever came of them, or ever will."

"Well, Pennington, your advice may be right; but it is not well-timed. Do you not see how fatigued and agitated Emily is? Retire to your chamber, love, and be sure to have me called if you are ill. —*Oh! what a mercy* that she is safe! how thankful I am!—Ben

Hardy, you may leave us for the present, but the remembrance of your good services will never leave us, as you shall shortly be convinced."

"Yes, yes, General," said Colonel Pennington, "you have cause for thankfulness; but remember to keep a sharp look-out. Those who undertake the charge of women have always more to do than they can well manage."

"I am too happy to be angry with you, my good friend; so good-night, or rather good-morning, for the bad night has passed away, thanks be to Heaven!"

CHAPTER XXIII.

There is a history in all men's lives,
Figuring the nature of the times deceased;
The which observed, a man many prophesy,
With a near aim, of the main chance of things
As yet not come to life. SHAKSPEARE.

THE conjectures and probable reasons assigned for the outrage, formed an ample and interesting topic of discourse the next day among all the domestics, as well as the masters of the family; but no satisfactory conclusion was the result of these their various opinions; and all that could be learned was, that the vessel, which had been hovering about in the Reach for some days, was seen beating out against wind and tide, at early dawn, and as the breeze freshened, and the tide turned, was soon out of sight.

The body of "*The Gentle Shepherd*" was of course found where it dropped, and a coroner's inquest called to ascertain the cause of his death. Few persons indeed cared about it, except to rejoice at the event; for he was the terror of all the country people in the neighbourhood, who had looked upon him with superstitious dread.

The General, who had hardly closed an eye all night, was aroused to a fresh sense of anxiety, by finding that the shock Lady Emily had undergone, together with exposure to the night air, had produced considerable fever; and though she endeavoured to make light of her indisposition, to avoid giving him pain, he saw directly through the kindness of the motive, but could not be deceived. He besought her, therefore, not to attempt getting up, and recom-

mended her keeping herself perfectly quiet, comforting her at the same time, by saying—"Lord Mowbray, I am happy to tell you, is going on as well as possible; and the surgeon assures us, that in a few days he will be able to go about as usual. We have every possible cause for thankfulness; and I do intreat, my dearest and best, that you will yield to my wishes, and take care of yourself, in order that we may all meet in comfort shortly."

Lady Emily was compelled to yield to this tender solicitude, not only from motives of obedience, but real illness; and during some days, the General had little else to do than pass from the chamber of one of the invalids to the other, and comfort them by the favourable accounts which he mutually conveyed. To each he softened the sufferings of the other: the kind words of Lady Emily, and her undisguised solicitude, thus faithfully reported to Lord Mowbray, proved greater emollients to soothe pain, than any which the healing art could afford.

So far all was satisfactory; but the unavoidable *tête-à-têtes* of Colonel Pennington and General Montgomery were of a distressing nature; the coldness of *friends* is ice itself; the heart is cut by its keen severity. Colonel Pennington sometimes groaned audibly, and continued to pace up and down the room like a troubled ghost; then he would suddenly stop and say abruptly:—"Well, and now matters have been brought to a climax, and that Lord Mowbray will, in all probability, propose for Lady Emily—what will you do? what can you do? *circumstanced as you are?*" and laying a strong emphasis on the latter words.

"It is time enough, my good Pennington—it is time enough to think of how I shall act, when that circumstance takes place—should it take place! The first thing to be thought of, is the recovery of my niece; the next, her immediate removal home to the farm-house."

"What! and so you really mean to take her away, and deprive her of the last chance she has of ever getting well settled? truly you are unaccountable.—Yet perhaps you may just as well do so. Lord Mowbray is a man who values the nobility of his descent, and its unsullied honour too highly, to marry the niece of one enveloped in a mystery which——"

"Pennington, I can bear a great deal from a person whose character I value so highly as I do yours; but there are limits beyond which no man can endure to be taunted even by his best friend. *We must meet no more,* in order to avoid the recurrence of this ir-

ritation; or meeting, we must cease altogether to converse, till such time as you have learned to repress your feelings, and to be silent on this subject."

Having thus spoken, he was about to leave the room, when Colonel Pennington caught hold of his hand, and in the loud voice of a great schoolboy who tries to repress the emotion which swelled to tears, he cried—"Well, well, Montgomery, you will be the death of me at last. I cannot bear it—I cannot indeed—to know that your fame is blighted, your prospects gone.—I shall quit England; I shall go away where I can never behold you more. I will not see the end of this." And he ceased speaking from being nearly suffocated by agitation. The General grasped his hand affectionately, and replied; "Do you think that I suffer less? no, no; the silent grief which preys upon *me*, is of a far more desperate kind; lament and commiserate, but do not blame me." So saying, he walked away, and his friend suffered him to depart.

A few more days saw the invalids restored to health, and once more reunited; Lady Emily paler than usual indeed, and still more aërial, her light step somewhat measured and trembling, as she leaned on her uncle for support; but still there was an alacrity in the manner in which she moved to meet the extended hand of Lord Mowbray, whose eyes sparkled from under their longfringed lids, whilst with an ill-subdued transport he pressed that hand to his lips and to his heart, but could not utter a word.

Lady Emily was the first to say, "Thank God!" and through the soft tears she did not attempt to restrain, she smiled delightedly, as she inquired how he felt, and when he should be able to use his arm, which at present was suspended in a sling.

"*How* I feel? My dear Lady Emily, I trust my friends the General and Colonel Pennington can answer *how* I feel; though all I feel," he whispered in her ear, "no one perhaps can know;" and then he changed colour, fearing lest he had said too much; for though he sought for, and found encouragement in Lady Emily's gentle expression of solicitude, and that it was impossible he should mistake the favourable nature of the answer which he read in her timid, tender glance, he ascribed (so ingenious is the nature of love in tormenting itself) these favourable symptoms to gratitude alone.

The conversation soon became more general, and relieved him from the embarrassment which otherwise would have become painful in the extreme. The party reverted to the transactions of the eventful night, and Colonel Pennington expressed his hope that

Lord Mowbray would never rest satisfied till he discovered the perpetrators of the deed.

"One thing I implore," cried Lady Emily. "It is, that none of you will endanger your own safety in such discovery:" and her eyes unconsciously rested upon Lord Mowbray with the tenderest look of concern.

"No, no, my Emily," said General Montgomery, "I do not think bravery ought to be thrown away upon such enemies, and I am sure Lord Mowbray is of my opinion; do not terrify yourself, or raise up unnecessary evils; it is not like you to do so."

"Humph!" said Colonel Pennington; "I have no notion of letting rascals in any shape escape that ought to be hanged; and wherever I find them—" (here he muttered sundry oaths and threats, which, in compliment to the presence of Lady Emily, were not *quite* audible.)

In the course of the morning it was proposed that the invalids should have a drive, and an open carriage was ordered for that purpose. Already had Lady Emily taken her place, and Lord Mowbray was standing on the step of the barouche, waiting for General Montgomery and Colonel Pennington; but the latter was nowhere to be found. He was gone (one of the servants said) on a fishing excursion to some trout-streams up the country. And the General, at the same time, came forward with a bundle of papers in his hands, apparently in considerable agitation, but it was evidently a pleased agitation.

"It is impossible I should accompany you in your drive," he said; "only look at the packet which I have to read and reply to before post-time; but this shall not deprive you of the benefit of your intended excursion: I think, my dear Lord, I cannot fear to entrust my treasure to your care, after the gallant manner in which you have defended it; and I hope you will mutually derive health and strength from this balmy air. So pray do not remain at home on my account; perhaps by the time you return, my business may be happily over."

There was an expression in the General's words and manner which filled Lady Emily's heart with a confused idea of felicity. "You have good news, I hope, from Frances," she said. A cloud came over the sunshine of his countenance, as he answered—"There are no letters from her."

"Can I not be of use to you, dearest uncle, by remaining at home?" asked Lady Emily; and she motioned to get out of the carri-

(Lord Mowbray felt for a moment that she *was too good.*) "Perhaps I can transcribe or write for you?"

"No, no, dearest and best, go, and inhale this delicious air; there is a renovation of existence in every breeze: and do you get into the carriage, my dear Lord, and take care of her; do not let her forget to put on her shawl, should the evening change on your return."

With what alacrity did Lord Mowbray obey! And the General blessed them in his heart as they drove from the door.

It was remarked in former times by a celebrated author, that to drive rapidly through the air in a carriage with a beautiful woman, was one of the most pleasurable things in the world. Independent, perhaps, of this high sanction for the observation, Lord Mowbray would have enjoyed the feeling in its most vivid sense; with this difference, that he preferred to drive leisurely, and *savourer à longs traits* the ineffable delight of being quietly seated by her who was the universe to him. To be thus situated with a beloved object, to feel a consciousness of being mutually dear to entertain that mystery of the heart's intimacy which has never been spoken, yet is completely understood, leaves nothing to regret, nothing to wish for. It is the short-lived perfection of a bliss which owns no alloy of earth; it is a luminous point of existence as indescribable as it is brief.

Lady Emily was the first to break the delicious silence, which continued for a considerable time after they had entered the carriage, by remarking that some communication of an intensely interesting nature must have been conveyed in the letter General Montgomery had received, "for there was a radiant expression of happiness on my uncle's countenance," she said, "which I have never seen even in his most joyous days, and this has filled my heart with gladness."

"Any thing that can add to your felicity," replied her companion, "will be most precious to mine; and, for the General's own sake also, I rejoice at the cause, whatever it may be."

They now drove along the high cliffs overlooking that part of the shore, from whence they could see, down among the rocks beneath, the very spot where Lord Mowbray had rescued Lady Emily, "I shudder as I look at it," cried the latter, involuntarily leaning towards her protector, as if again seeking his support.

"And I too," he cried; "although there is rapture in the contrast of the thought with this delightful moment." And again they *relapsed into* silence.

he progress of their drive they wound up the hill, and came

in sight of the temple which Lord Mowbray had erected in honour of his first interview with Lady Emily. "I thought," said she, "a very few days ago, that I might perhaps never have beheld that beautiful building more; and I feel a double pleasure to be thus again permitted to admire it."

"Never see it more!" replied her companion; "how so, Lady Emily? what do you mean?"

Lady Emily by this time recollected that her speech might have disclosed what General Montgomery would not choose she should reveal, and she replied with some confusion, but at the same time endeavouring to laugh it off. "Oh! only that my uncle had decided on returning home immediately; and it is always so uncertain whether one ever comes back to any place or not—life itself is so uncertain, so precarious."

"Oh! do not remind me of that at present," he said; "I am not prepared to listen to you calmly, not good enough to bear it. Surely there may be moments when one may be pardoned for——"

"For forgetting that one is mortal?" said Lady Emily, with a smile.

"Precisely," he answered, with an emphasis and a look that threw her into a confusion, which, however pleasurable, she was glad enough to escape from by saying, "Well! since I am once more here, allow me to avail myself of the opportunity to behold again the beautiful fresco."

"I was in hope," he said, "that you would deign to rest yourself within the pavilion; for, after your illness, I dreaded that you might be fatigued, and I have ordered some refreshment to be prepared for you."

How many undefined sensations of pleasure glowed in her breast, when she found herself in this beautiful building! It was deserving the admiration of less partial judges than Lady Emily; and she was quite struck with a splendid effect of sunshine, which happened to light up the fresco at the moment they entered. While she gazed at the work, she could not but reflect, that he who had thus commemorated the incident that stood thus stamped, as it were, in undying beauty before her, must have felt an interest in it beyond that of a mere lover of the art; and she half repented having expressed so openly her anxiety to see it again, which threw a sudden constraint over her manner, that Lord Mowbray did not fail to observe, and, with the delicacy of true love, to misinterpret to his own disadvantage.

"Perhaps," he thought, "she repents of having given me a gleam of hope by her previous behaviour, or it may be she has changed her mind. At all events, I can bear this suspense no longer;" then with a sort of desperate courage, and in a voice rendered doubly persuasive by the tremulousness of its accent, he declared his love for her, and besought her to decide his fate.

Above all feigning, Lady Emily received his declaration as it merited, with an undisguised tenderness; and suffered him to read in her looks the tide of joy which inundated her heart, and which her soft language confirmed; but after the first inebriation of the moment had subsided, she added, with a changed expression, "But my uncle, my dear uncle."

"What of him? Will he then oppose our union?"

"Yes—no—that is to say, I fear——"

"Fear what, my Emily? what have you to fear from him? Surely he loves you too well to oppose your wishes on a point in which you have just now so sweetly confessed your own happiness is concerned?"

"My uncle would do every thing that he could, I am sure, to forward, not impede, our wishes;—only I fear he may have scruples, on your account, in regard to——" and she hesitated.

"To what, my Emily? for you must let me *call* you mine—to what? on my account? what can you mean—what—what mystery do your words imply? do you mean, regard to my past life? if that is all, I hope to satisfy him that my errors are repented of—that they are past for ever."

"Oh! I made no allusion to yourself when I spoke as I did; but, in fine, it is my uncle must speak to you; be assured, I have no secrets to hide; but—there is a——, and my fears are proportioned to the interest I feel."

"What! can it be possible that you should only have held the cup of happiness to my lips to dash it thence for ever?"

"Do not, I beseech you, Lord Mowbray, try my feelings thus; it is more than I can well bear to contend at the same moment with my own anxiety and your suspicions. What motive could I have for such unworthy conduct? I have confessed my attachment to you in all its vividness, and I am ready to promise that none other shall supersede it in my heart; but my uncle is to me as a parent; you would yourself justly condemn me, could I dispose of my hand without a reference to his authority, and he may have reasons for *disapproving* our marriage, which do not in any way attach to you;

yet surely this possibility, to which I merely allude, ought not to affect you thus. At all events, is it not sufficient happiness in this earth, thus to love and be beloved?"

Lord Mowbray was all penitence for his impetuosity, promised her obedience in every thing, and rapturously kissed her hands. "Nay," she said playfully, "that promise, you know, it may become *my* duty to make; for see," she added, pointing to the hat in the fresco, and recollecting her own words,—"you see *you have caught it at last*. But we must not forget that the hours fly too swiftly when they pass thus; let us return to the Castle."

"Nay, grant me one little moment longer, my own, own Emily. I feel as though I were going to lose you."

"You cannot, ought not to feel thus; I am your own, quite your own." And she passed swiftly by him, and stepped lightly into the carriage, in which he was reluctantly compelled to follow her.

The road back seemed but a mere span, so quickly, as it appeared to them, did they arrive at the Castle gate. It was, however, long past the usual dinner-hour, and the General was walking to and fro on the terrace, somewhat anxiously looking for the carriage. "When I have been near losing a treasure," he said, as he gave her his arm to alight, "you cannot wonder, my Lord, that I should be terrified lest a second ill chance were to deprive me of it."

Lord Mowbray's thoughts and feelings being fixed on one subject, he directly fancied that this speech alluded in some way to him, and he construed it into something inimical to his wishes. He tormented himself unnecessarily; but Lady Emily, better read in her uncle's manner and expressions, saw only that sentiment of gladness and happiness confirmed, which she had observed when they had set out on their drive.

"Make haste to dress, dearest," cried the General; "do not keep us waiting any longer; there is Pennington, all impatience to see the produce of his successful campaign smoking on the board. Remember, if poor Alpinia were here, she would say, 'A bonnie bride's soon busked,'"

The proverb made Lady Emily blush and Lord Mowbray look "unutterable things;" while the General a little maliciously enjoyed the confusion of the parties, and observed, "Well, I think you must both have quarrelled this morning, for you look so strange and dismayed; but never mind, I believe we shall be able to arrange matters at some future period so as to settle your differences."

Lady Emily only replied by saying, in a cheerful voice, that she would hasten to obey his commands, and be soon ready for dinner; while Lord Mowbray, like a man in doubt as to the General's meaning, uttered something scarcely audible; and, making apologies for having detained him beyond the usual hour, passed on hastily to his toilette.

Each of the individuals who met during the repast, were conscious that something particular respecting them and their interest had occurred; but all seemed averse to entering on the subject which it was evident occupied their thoughts, and this consciousness threw a constraint over the conversation that seemed to baffle even Lady Emily's attempts to break the spell. When, however, the dinner was removed, General Montgomery, said, in his wonted cheerfulness of manner, "My dear friends, I must beg your attention to a subject of deep and vital importance, and in which I know you will all take interest for my sake; but, though," he added with a smile, "ladies in general are excluded from councils of state, Emily, on the present occasion, must be admitted to the sitting, and as my communication will take up some time, may I request, Lord Mowbray, that we are not interrupted by the entrance of any one till you ring to admit them?"

The real interest felt by the parties to whom he addressed this speech, left no doubt on his mind of the eagerness with which they would attend to what he was about to communicate; and turning to Colonel Pennington, he said, "Now, my good friend, the time is happily arrived when I can explain to your satisfaction the mystery of the Mask."

"You might have done so long ago, if you had chosen; I know that well enough," exclaimed Colonel Pennington roughly.

Lady Emily started from her seat with surprise and pleasure, saying. "Now, thank Heaven! our woes are ended. I see, I know, that all is as it should be."

The General besought her to compose herself, and thus commenced his discourse.—"You recollect, Pennington, that when I retired into my study with the disguised stranger, we were alone?"

"Humph!" groaned the Colonel.

"And I do not deny that I held my hand on my pistols, with some idea that it might prove necessary to use them. The Mask, however, opened his business with a profession of friendly interest; and then added, that if I but wisely received the caution he was going to give *me, I might still* retain a good fortune, an unsullied name, and a

high station in family descent; but if I contemned or rejected it, I should be hurled headlong to ruin and disgrace.

"You may suppose I denied the assertion that it was in any person's power to do this, and I answered in terms of haughty indignation to that effect; adding, that if he were come to extort money from me, which his manner and mode of communication naturally led me to suppose was the case, he had much mistaken my character, and I commanded him peremptorily to depart immediately. 'Have a care, General,' said he, 'how you slight the offers I make to you—you are proud in your *own* integrity, and doubtless have a right to be so; no one hitherto ever questioned the *honour* of General Montgomery. You are proud too in the reflected glory of a long line of ancestry:—but know, Sir, that the integrity of those whom you suppose immaculate, is more than questionable; and that, in consequence, the roof under which you now are sheltered is not your own—neither is this domain yours —nor is the blood you have hitherto boasted of, legitimate—your mother was never married to your father.'"

Here Colonel Pennington started up from his chair, and looked in the General's face. He went on—"At the unparalleled effrontery of this assertion, the big drops stood on my forehead. I was unable to speak, or to give utterance to the defiance with which I prepared to meet the calumny. He went on to say, 'It is natural that you, Sir, with all your honourable feelings, should be hard of belief to a circumstance so overwhelming, so utterly humiliating; but my employers have not lightly taken up this business, or acted upon vague and uncertain data. They have irrefragable proof of your being born out of wedlock; the documents and papers are in their hands, which fully explain all the circumstances of your father's attachment to Miss Maclean, his parents' opposition to their union, and the subsequent misfortune of your untimely birth.' Here, I confess, my indignation burst forth, and I flung the falsehood in his teeth.

"'It is well,' he said, 'it is even natural; I can forgive you; but I am concerned to see that your feelings thus overcome your judgment. Again I request that you will hear me farther and patiently. I will then leave you to decide at leisure on the proposal which it remains for me to offer to your consideration, and for you to accept. Should the papers and documents, of which copies shall be sent you, prove conclusive to your maturer judgment, (and I cannot doubt that you will at once recognise their authenticity,) you will

then, I conceive, not deem the proposal I now make, so utterly unworthy of your attention. A man of no mean birth, of fortune, or situation in life, has been for some time secretly attached to your niece, Lady Emily; swear to induce this lady to give her hand to him, settle your estate on her at your death, and the whole affair shall be hushed into everlasting secrecy. You will save a mother's reputation, your own disgrace, and secure the happiness of your niece, while you save her from the misery of seeing your downfal, which, in some degree, you must be conscious will attach a stain on her.'

"'What!' I cried indignantly, 'barter my precious niece's hand as a bribe to maintain my own rights and character, thus slanderously and surreptitiously attacked! What, Sir, do you take me for? A pusillanimous, superannuated dotard? Away, Sir, I will hear no more; provoke me farther, and I will call my servants to tear that disguise from off you, under which you have sheltered the baseness of your purpose, and have dared thus to pollute my ears and insult my understanding. Away, Sir, or the protection of my roof shall no longer be your security.'

"The Mask spoke not; but putting his hand into his breast, advanced towards me. I had mine on my pistol; I thought the moment was come for using it, and I felt rather ashamed when I saw him draw forth a letter, which he held before me. 'This letter I must not let out of my hands,' said he; 'but you may read it, and mark it well.' The characters I knew to be those of my dearest mother. I gazed in stupid astonishment for a moment; then, rallying my senses, I read the words traced on that fatal paper. The letter was addressed to my father, full of tenderness; such a letter as she alone knew how to write; the character, the style were hers: but the information it contained, how heart-rending! how impossible to credit that it should be genuine! It was addressed to my father; and after lamenting the opposition of his parents to their union, and expressing her misery on that subject, it announced, in a postscript, the birth of a son. I read it rapidly; but the contents were too deeply engraven on my mind for me ever to forget them. A remembrance of a thousand mysterious circumstances, the constant estrangement of my father's family from himself and my mother,—all rushed upon my mind, and the belief of the truth of this dark story flashed with dreadful conviction on me. I stood like one who had received his death-blow.

"'Are you satisfied?' asked my tormentor; and, ere I could

reply, he rushed from the room and out of the house, shutting the doors with violence as he passed."

"What! and you did not fire, then?"

"No, Pennington, thank God I did not! The report of the pistol was only the effect of your imagination. The villain fled, but he left a dagger in my heart. The state of mind in which this communication had plunged me was such, that nothing could disguise the inward agony of my soul. To attempt to describe it is vain: suffice it to say, that the change you all remarked in me was the effect of this dreadful interview. Every thing I had loved, my possessions, my dependants, became all to me a cruel mockery; nay, even my dearest Emily was a source of bitter pain and self-reproach. To seem the thing I was not, a sort of phantom, a tinsel puppet of honours and dignities which did not, in fact, belong to me—Oh! intolerable weight of woe! better be the commonest hind that breaks the clods in the field, than wear the garb of spurious greatness.

"For a time, I almost forgot to look for aid where only it can be found; but I was mercifully reminded that we are never forsaken if we put our trust where alone it can be placed with perfect security; and then came over me that indescribable calm which is the portion of sufferers who know no pangs of self-reproach.

"I now coolly reflected on what I ought to do, situated as I was. I even made it a question whether I should not openly declare my supposed illegitimacy; but then the idea of exposing the errors of beloved parents withheld me, and a lingering hope remained that I might still be able to prove the marriage. The letter might have been a forgery. Forgeries have been known to have deceived the very persons whose handwriting they imitated. I determined, therefore, after many fluctuating thoughts, to put every thing in such order at the Hall, as would enable me to leave it at a moment's warning, without ever returning to behold it again; and to settle my affairs with so much precision, as might afford to the next owner an exact account of all my expenditure in and about the house and place; its improved state from that in which I received it; and my conscientious use of the timber, etc.; so that no arrears could be claimed in the event of my being dispossessed. I then went to town, and there my indefatigable researches to obtain the necessary documents of my birthright proved of no avail. In every face methought I saw a secret foe; every morning I awoke expecting that the day would not pass without my being summoned to answer to the charge of unlawfully possessing an estate to which I had no right."

"Ah, my dear uncle," exclaimed Lady Emily, interrupting him, "what you must have suffered at that time, when I was thinking only of pleasure and amusement!"

"Frances's marriage," continued the General, "which, under any other circumstance, would have been so gratifying to me, now weighed me down with distress and confusion: I was a beggar, and had made my nieces partakers in my ruin. You may conceive my wretched state of humiliation, but I have no words to describe it. When, at length, all hope seemed utterly destroyed, I determined to suit my mode of life to my fortunes: I dismissed my servants, sought out an abode suitable to my change of condition, and to bend my mind to the circumstances in which I was placed. In this, my great extremity, I had one blessing left me, which consoled me for the loss of all the rest. In you, my Emily, I found unchanging love, unwearying attention, and a serene cheerfulness, which lightened my darkest hours."

"Dearest uncle, talk not thus; you distress me. I did only what every other would have done, I trust, in my place. I should have been a wretch had I felt otherwise."

"Well, you all know what followed. I settled at the farm; and there, except that I received long threatening and anonymous letters, I lived in that peace which conscious rectitude affords; and still, as these letters were not followed by any open attack, I acquired a resignation and composure which restored, in great measure, my health. The full strength of the storm never broke upon me till Pennington detailed the terrible reports which were circulated; that I stood branded in the public opinion as a murderer. It was not enough that the blot of being an illegitimate usurper of wealth and situation should attach to me—to be whispered of, as of one who, though courted and followed for the advantages obtained by frequenting my house and sharing in my luxuries, was nevertheless a fraudulent and short-lived possessor. I was also accused of murder! Now, then, did I feel called upon to decide my fate. I was either tamely to sit down, covered with infamy, or, by disclosing the whole story and publicly calling upon those who declared themselves capable of dispossessing me of my estates, to come forward and prove their claim—to load the memory of my parents with disgrace, and to exchange the infamy of a sinful birth, which was not my own fault, for the supposed guilt of a crime which would have attached *to me alone.*

"*Before I finally* decided which of these measures to pursue, I

determined to await the return of a person from the place where I was born, who had been sent there by my agents, and whose arrival in England was hourly expected. I felt, however, that to remain an hour longer under Lord Mowbray's roof, or to subject him to the disgrace of having such an inmate, was not permissable, and I resolved to leave Mowbray Castle the very next day."

"I conjure you, my dear General," said Lord Mowbray, "not to distress me by such allusions. My trust in you has never for an instant wavered; it never can waver; permit me to implore you——"

"I thank you, my dear Lord, with all gratitude. But hear me to the end. That same night, previous to my intended departure, the event occurred which might, but for your providential interference, have ended so fatally, and which, now that I connect the various discrepancies of this strange story together, I cannot help believing must have originated in, and have been an endeavour on the part of the same iniquitous person, whose slander and threats have embittered my existence, and indeed nearly deprived me of it altogether. The impression is on my mind, that the attempt to seize my niece was not made by smugglers, or with any view to plunder: but, be this as it may, the sequel of my story, which is now near its close, will prove to you that I have reason to be the happiest and most grateful of men."

Colonel Pennington arose, walked quickly to the General's chair, seized the back of it with one hand, while with the other he covered his face, and thus awaited the rest of his friend's communication.

"My messenger is returned from Turin, and I have this day received from my agents the register of my mother's marriage, which took place in the English Ambassador's palace, together with that of my birth, which happened some fifteen months afterwards at Paris. Other letters and documents give a full detail of this event. My mother did unfortunately marry my father without consent of their parents; and from this imprudence has ensued all the misery their offspring has endured, and which might, but for the wonderful and providential preservation of these papers, have sent him down to a dishonoured grave. The particulars of this business I need not now enter into; its blessed conclusion suffices to restore me, and all those most dear to me, to happiness and honour."

Lady Emily threw herself into her uncle's arms. The Colonel left the room to hide his emotion. Lord Mowbray was not less intensely affected with a sense of happiness; and the broken words, the glances of affection, and the silent prayes which were mutually

exchanged between the parties, and offered in silence by each to Heaven for his unexpected felicity, could alone convey any idea of their respective feelings.

Lord Mowbray took an early opportunity the next day to request a conversation with the General, and he then, with all the timidity of a real passion, requested Lady Emily's hand. He avowed his having already disclosed his love to herself, and added, he believed he had reason to hope, that, should the General not oppose their union, Lady Emily was inclined to lend a favourable ear to his suit. "My dear Lord, it were impossible for me to deny, if I wished it, any thing that my precious Emily conceives necessary to her happiness; but in the present instance, as in almost every other, from her birth up until now, that blessed creature's choice only confirms my own.—She is yours, my dear Lord, with all that the fondest and most parental love can add to bless your union. Yet stay, do not thank me yet; one proviso I must make. It shall never be said that General Montgomery gave his niece to Lord Mowbray while a shadow of reflected disgrace from her uncle could rest upon her."

"Oh my dear, my honoured General! do not, do not dash the full and brimming over cup of felicity with such vain and useless and cruel alloy"

"I know, my dear Lord, all you would say; but in this respect I am inexorable. Go—go to Emily, consult with her; she will tell you, I am right. Soon, very soon, this dark surmise must be done away, and then not a shadow will remain to dim the brightness of our horizon."

Lord Mowbray acquiesced mournfully, for he saw that to press his suit would be of no avail, and he felt, too, that there was an indelicacy in so doing: from which he shrunk. With grateful and delighted acknowledgments he poured out his heart's feelings before General Montgomery, and then left him, to share with Lady Emily the joy with which his own bosom was overflowing. She, with her usual gentleness and implicit obedience to her uncle's wishes, endeavoured to place all the reason of the General's resolve in its best point of view; and Lord Mowbray felt compelled to restrain his own rebellious impatience, and to rest contented with a promise of that future bliss, which he would fain have secured at a nearer and more certain moment.

Colonel Pennington, with all his wonted impetuosity, upbraided *the General* with a too scrupulous refinement; but the resolve was *not to be changed*, and the General announced his immediate return

to Montgomery Hall. As he wound up his intention with an affectionate invitation to Lord Mowbray to accompany them, and an assurance to the Colonel, that if he too was not of the party, he would never more consider him as his friend,—this resolution was not likely to be productive of any thing but general satisfaction; and it is seldom that four persons more united in taste and mind, more happy in outward circumstances, or more blessed in virtuous and honourable attachment, ever set forth with gayer hearts to travel together in the road of life.

CHAPTER XXIV.

Elle était de ce monde où les plus belles choses
Ont le pire destin;
Et Rose, elle a vécu ce que vivent les roses,
L'espace d'un matin. MALHERBE.

WHAT words can paint the delight with which the General once more entered upon his domains! At the last stage before they reached Montgomery Hall, spite of his serene and heavenly temper, he could not help evincing the utmost impatience, owing to a delay in procuring horses, lest, as he confessed himself, he should not arrive in time to behold, while it was yet daylight, his dear loved woods, and it gratified him to observe an equal interest in Lady Emily.

When the carriage drove round the last turning that led into the gates of the park, for a moment his feelings overcame him; and a few tears, in spite of all his efforts to restrain his emotion, rolled over his cheeks. Here he was welcomed by a troop of villagers, who flocked around his carriage, and rent the air with their acclamations—not the popular acclamations of a rabble, fired by momentary impulse into an enthusiasm for which they could give no reason, but the heartfelt proofs of an undoubted attachment which had existed for many generations towards the family of Montgomery, and which, handed down from father to son, the result of mutual services between the lord and his dependants, was carefully maintained by both in the habitual fulfilment of their several duties. "I am afraid," said the General, addressing Lord Mowbray, "all this must be rather tiresome to you, my dear Lord."

"It is doing me an injustice, I assure you, General, to suppose so," replied Lord Mowbray; "every thing which gives you pleasure is interesting to me besides."

"Humph!" interrupted the Colonel. "It must be a vitiated mind, indeed, which can deem such suffrage tiresome. In truth, I do not believe, that there exists that man to whom it could be indifferent; but there are too many, unfortunately, who forget, or disdain to use, the means by which these gratifying testimonies are preserved and cherished; for though they violate all the ties which would preserve their rights in the hearts of their tenantry, they feel mortified and angry when they cease to receive such proof of their attachment, as can alone be preserved by an unvarying interchange of good offices, and the influence of long residence and constant presence. When these means are neglected by the possessor of a great domain, he can have no right to expect the reward due only to an opposite mode of conduct. This is not your case, General; and hitherto, my Lord, it has not been yours; so that I may preach without fearing to displease."

"Ay, and you have preached well too, my good Pennington," said the General.

The latter, even during his forced absence, had thought of and consulted the welfare of all those connected with his estates. He had given constant proof of a lively interest in their welfare, and even at distance and in absence had preserved their devoted attachment to him and to his family; the rapture with which they now greeted his return amongst them, was therefore genuine and vivid.

To leave no part of this happy picture untouched by the sunshine of joy, all the place had been kept up in its highest perfection. The old trees and young plantations were thriving and vigorous, and seemed to wave their foliage in welcome and in gladness. Even the good old Sir Richard Townley had wisely kept his snug corner by the fireside in the oak parlour, together with the superannuated hounds, Sprightly and Baymoon, though still they were not so superannuated as to have forgotten their lord; they did their very best to testify their joyous recognition of him, and even their fidelity was a balm to the good General's heart. "How goes it, Sir Richard?" he cried, when the latter first came to meet him; "I should not have known the Hall again, had I not found you here. I hope you have taken care of yourself during my long absence," he added, *kindly laying* his hand on his shoulder, and appearing to require its *aid as he walked* into the house.—"Ah! and my dear old hounds

too, the last of that fine pack, still as fat and as sleek as ever!"

"Dear creatures!" cried Lady Emily, coaxing them; "and my canaries, and the old grey parrot?"

"All vastly well, I am happy to say," answered Sir Richard, only longing to see their beautiful mistress again. But I have taken the greatest care of them, I do assure your Ladyship; covered them up on the winter nights, and saw them all tended and cleaned every day. I would not have neglected any thing Lady Emily had a regard for—no, not for all the world. And, General, allow me to assure you, you will not find one thistle about the premises; to-morrow, when you take your rounds, you will see what use I have been of, not a root left any where; I have worked—you do not know how hard I have worked."

"My worthy Knight," cried the General, "I am truly indebted to you; but I shall not wait till to-morrow; it is a fine evening, and I must go just as far as my favourite terrace.—Do have the goodness to fetch me my hat."

While Sir Richard went in quest of it, the General said—"Who could despise the innocent boasting of that kind-hearted man? let the proud philosopher, or the fastidious critic, contemn or disdain his society: I avow that I would not exchange it for theirs; there is often more comfort, more genuine friendship, to be met with from such a humble unpretending friend, than from those whose attainments and professions are placed on a higher standard—ay, and more to be learned too in the greatest school of all—that of truth and simplicity."

While the General and Sir Richard walked on before, Lady Emily enjoyed the delight of leaning on Lord Mowbray's arm, hearing him recapitulate all his thoughts and feelings during his first residence there. The past was brought forward to add its stores of felicity to the present moment; and as she every now and then bounded from him to look at some favourite plant wich she had tended with her own hands, he felt all the charm of a character, whose purity and freshness had never been sullied by a factitious life, or deadened to innocent pleasures. The fineness of the evening, the perfume of the dewy flowers, the transparency of the æther, and the pale light of the stars as they at first came twinkling forth, but, growing brighter and brighter as the night drew on, covered the heavens with their glory,—were all objects which united to inspire them with sensations of happiness that owned a touch of more than earthly fecility.

The next day, Lady Emily was awake at an early hour: her

slumber had been of that profound kind, that she arose, as it were, to a new existence. But quickly all the circumstances of her own identity returned, and she remembered with pious gratitude, that she was a happy favoured being. In her recollections, however, a thought of the lost Rose, the humble companion of her girlish sports, saddened her heart, and she determined on paying the only tribute she could to that remembrance, by going immediately to see old Maud Delvin. Though she had often heard of her, a month or more had now elapsed since she had had any tidings, and she blamed herself as though she had been guilty of unkindness; many a regret, many an aching throb swelled her heart, as she thought of the days when she trod that path to meet her pretty innocent attendant. Now—she dared not even send a kindly sigh towards her, degraded as she was to the lowest stage of infamy.

Lady Emily had purposely gone alone, that the feelings of the unhappy mother might not be wounded by the presence of strangers, or of any one less feelingly alive to their situation than herself. When she arrived at the foot of the hill on which the cottage stood, she heard a confused sound of many voices, and when she reached the garden wicket, she could scarcely believe that what she beheld was real. Many of the fruit trees which grew in the little orchard adjoining the garden were cut down, and lay prostrate and mutilated; under those which remained still untouched, benches were placed, and a blue board with gold letters announced that the once rural orchard was turned into a tea drinking, or rather beer-drinking garden. The garden itself was entirely dismantled; the little flower-beds were converted into a gravel-road; and the honeysuckle porch before the door had made way for a large staring sign of the Carlton arms, swinging and creaking to and fro upon a blue post. The white musk-rose, Delvin's pride, that had covered the whole house, and flaunted over the thatched roof, which had been planted when his child was born, to grow, as he fondly imagined, the emblem of herself, was now torn down and trodden under foot by the workmen and painters who were daubing the walls with a bright brick colour.

"What can all this mean?" said Emily, addressing one of the men; "by whose authority is all this devastation carrying on? Where are the Delvins?"

"They are in the workhouse, an' please your Ladyship; at least *Maud be there,* I believe, if she isn't dead."

"*Dead! or, if living,* in the workhouse!" exclaimed Lady Emily,

horror-stricken; "who sent her there? how came I not to be informed of this? who has turned them out of their dwelling?"

"Oh! as to the matter of that, my Lady, really I cannot tell; your Ladyship knows some folks said you were never coming back to these parts; and as to the Delvins being turned out, there be many a way, you know, my Lady, of turning folks out of their dwellings, and making it seem as if it had been their own faults, when it was no such thing; but the Squire is a man of power, in comparison to they poor foolks, and he has got the house in his own hands;—however, there be those who say, might overcomes right; so he has gived the house to one they call Black Giles, him as now keeps the Magpie out on the common."

"But," said Lady Emily, "I do not understand by what right such a barbarous thing could be done?"

"It seems," replied the workman, "as how the Squire proved in law, that Delvin's lease was out a year ago, and that he was only a tenant at will, I think they call it; and so as he had given 'em notice to quit, he had a right to turn 'em out."

"Horrible!" said Lady Emily: "but how came it that the Delvins did not apply to my uncle and to me? How has this dreadful transaction been kept a secret from us?"

"I'm sure I don't know; but" (scratching his head) "mayhap your Ladyship did not hear that Ould Delvin heard some news of his daughter in *Lunnun*, and set out one night *suddently;* and poor Maud was taken very bad at the time, and fell in a fit of some sort or other, so that they thought she'd have died outright. She was lying speechless when they comed to turn her out of her house; so she couldn't say nothing *against* it, poor soul, not she; and she is now lying in a sort of senseless state, if she been't gone dead; at any rate, she is not expected to live."

Not one word could Lady Emily utter, but she sunk down on one of the felled trees. She leaned her head on her hand and listened for some time with a sort of horror to the discordant noises that so rudely invaded that once tranquil and rural spot, instead of the singing of birds and the humming of bees that she had been wont to listen to there. The workmen without, continued to toss the timber about and felled the luxurious boughs with merciless strokes; while the hammering within went on briskly, and the coarse language of the men seemed to her ears like the jargon of evil spirits rejoicing in the devastation they made.

Lady Emily continued to sit on, unable to move away, as though

she were spell-bound. She saw the last drive of the pick-axe tear up the long twisting roots of the white clustering rose-tree; she saw its flowers soiled, trodden upon, and trailed on the ground. She thought of its namesake, of the worthy couple who had planted and cherished it, and then for the first time the tears gushed from her eyes.

After this natural burst of feeling she composed herself in some degree, and was enabled to follow the man whom she had procured to show her the way to the workhouse. At the end of the village, down a very narrow and dirty lane, stood this abode of wretchedness. Lady Emily was obliged to stoop as she descended a few broken steps into a low close room, where the first object she beheld was poor Maud sitting listlessly on the side of a miserable mattress which served her for a bed. Three other old women were likewise in the room. One of them was ill; the other two, the very picture of squalid poverty and idleness, were loitering about as if they hoped for, and expected nothing better than the state from which they had ceased to make any efforts to extricate themselves. The room and its inhabitants presented altogether a scene of suffering hitherto unknown to Lady Emily. The walls, which had been whitewashed, were discoloured with various stains. Ill-spelled names were scrawled over them in various directions, the vapid resources of ignorance and idleness and ennui, like the scourge of the great and little vulgar; and a pewter mug and broken cup stood on a table, whence issued a potent smell of gin. A checked apron stuffed into a broken pane, excluded the only breath of air which could have rendered the effluvia less baneful.

But Lady Emily's attention was entirely directed to Mrs. Delvin. The mattress on which the poor woman sat, was only supported from the damp mud floor by one bit of wood, the rest of the bedstead being completely broken. Her grey locks hung from beneath a dirty torn cap, and gave her an appearance of neglect and untidiness, the very reverse of her former self. She brushed her hair from off her eyes with her two hands, when Lady Emily entered; but having gazed at the latter for some time, she burst into laughter, and resumed her expression of utter unconsciousness. "Maud, I am come to see you; do you not know me? it is I, Emily Lorimer, from Montgomery Hall."

Maud did not reply; but taking a long crooked yellow pin out of *her clothes, she* passed it between her fingers several times, saying, "*There, it is* quite straight again now," and then began to roll up

the ragged coverlid of her bed, and made signs to Lady Emily to approach.

"Take it," she said, whispering—"take it to Rose poor foolish thing, she may be dying of cold, you know, by this time:" and then again she laughed—that frenzied laugh which makes the blood run cold to hear.

"How long," said Lady Emily, after a considerable pause—"how long is it since Maud has been in this terrible state, and when did she come to this horrible place?"

"Your ladyship is quite right," said a shabby-genteel old woman, with the remains of a red wig, and a dirty gause cap pinned on it; "it is a horrible place, as I know well enough that have been here these ten years; and as to Maud, she's as bad as may be, poor creature; but she's not worse off than her betters. She has been in the same state as now you see her, for this last fortnight. I say, Betty," (roaring in the ear of her deaf companion), "it's about a month, an't it, since they tossed her down on that there bed; and for this last fortnight she has never moved off it."

"What do you say?" asked Betty.

"Oh, never mind!" interrupted Lady Emily; "it is enough."

"Ay, it be a fine day," said the deaf one, talking on; "an' if the sun shines in here, he shines every where, and that's sure."

"How plaguy deaf she is, my Lady! you may as well talk to a post. But I say it is about a month since old Maud was brought in here, and out again, it's my belief, she'll never go but as a corpse: but lauk-a-daisie, my Lady, your Ladyship need not take on so, though you 're a kind lady. But there are many poor folks more to be pitied than she, who have lived in very different state, and yet com'd to worse than Maud Delvin; only she was always proud-like, as a body may say, and so vain of that slut of a daughter of hers! Pride goes before a fall, they say. Why we poor old folks have lived here these ten, ay these fifteen years, and we are not dead yet, though we have never had a fine lady or any living soul to give us a bit of any thing comforting; no, not so much as a drop of gin, or a dish of tea."

The garrulity of the complainant did not obtain for her the commiseration it was intended to excite; but after Lady Emily had settled with the overseer of this ill-regulated and abused charity whatever could tend to the present comfort or relief of Maud, and having remained a sufficient time to assure herself that the miserable woman's affliction rendered her wholly insensible to any consolation

she might have derived from her presence, she returned slowly and mournfully to the Hall.

On the road there, she had to pass the little brook, where the broken bridge was still in its mutilated state, and the willow-trees lay stripped of their bark, and bleaching in the sun. She sat down on the bank to recover from the shock she had received, and to compose her spirits before she met her uncle, in order not to damp his happiness; yet, in doing this, how many sad events crowded upon her recollection since the day of her morning excursion with Rose Delvin, and threw a cloud over the present brightness of her destiny! She remembered all poor Andrew's words about the ominous foreshowing which was to be observed in the ruin of the bridge; and she could not help thinking that there is frequently a shadowing type of things to come, in the casualties of every day's occurrence, which the eye of experience reads with some power of prophetic vision. Who can despise the words of the aged and the poor? These persons, from a course of trials (if they are not vicious persons), are by necessity more spiritual than those who, in the pride of life and youth and fortune, look not beyond the opaque and sensible objects which surround them. Pleasure and pride extinguish the most exalted ardours of our nature. Let any soul retire within itself, and think of the moment when it conceives itself to have been purest—happiest:—they will not say, if they speak sincerely, that those moments were moments of the greatest worldly success—but the reverse. The self-humiliation of human vanity is its greatest glory.

Reflections of this nature found entrance even in the young mind of Emily. An hour's affliction will frequently convey an age of experience, if duly entertained; and Lady Emily had had many hours of affliction. But from this reverie she was startled by an approaching footstep. She looked up, and beheld Lord Mowbray.

At his approach, all sorrow fled, and the consciousness of present happiness banished every pain. Still the traces of regret were visible to his searching eyes; and he anxiously requested her to tell him what had occurred to affect her. All that she related only served to unfold more charms in her character, and render her more and more dear to him. It were presumptuous to attempt to describe the mysterious enchantment which these happy lovers felt, as they walked slowly back and gazed on their former haunts. The rivulet, the flowery mead, and the golden-stemmed willows bending over the stream, were all mementos of the spring-time of

their loves; and in each, some precious fancy dwelt, that none other could share, and few, perhaps, have ever conceived—for how few love as they did!

In the course of that day, an unexpected visitor arrived, no less a person than Corrie Lovel himself. He humbly but earnestly craved an immediate interview with the General, which was readily granted, and Lady Emily, and Lord Mowbray too, joyfully welcomed the old man; but when the first salutations were over, Corrie Lovel appeared restless, and evidently occupied with some anxious thought. After considerable awkwardness, he confessed that he wished to speak to the General *alone*.

"What, a secret! my friend Corrie. I am tired of secrets. However, I cannot refuse you any thing. Come into the house, and you shall be heard."

Corrie followed General Montgomery in silence; and when the latter was seated, stood up before him, and laying his hand on his breast, said, "I have an ugly business to speak to you about, General, but my conscience would not let me rest till I confessed my crime to you. You have saved my life once, and you will not deprive me of it. I have murdered a man! yes, General, do not start, and look at me so angry-like, I have done this deed;—but it was to save you from some threatened danger."

"To save me, Corrie! I am shocked, indeed, that you should make my name a covering for such a crime."

"Honoured General, restrain your anger, I implore you, till you have heard my story. It is about a year ago, that, being overtaken by one of the biggest storms I was ever out in, I turned into the Magpie public-house, on Love-lane Common, for shelter; and having taken a pipe and a pot of beer, I fell into a sound sleep, from which I was awakened by the noise of some men's voices, who seemed disputing together angrily. They were in a small parlour next to the tap, and did not think that the partition was so thin, I suppose, for I could hear what they said whenever they spoke out.

"'The old fellow is staunch,' said one of them; 'game to the back-bone; nevertheless, the letter did his business, or I am much mistaken; and now it only remains that you get the necessary papers ready, and follow up the affair briskly.' 'You may depend on my doing so,' answered the other; 'but remember, Sir, my honour's at stake; and though a job's a job, I may make a bad job of it, if I don't take care. It is, a matter, Sir, which requires great caution. I am the friend and legal adviser of both parties, and

all I do is done, I am sure, of good-will, and with a true spirit of friendship to both. But, nevertheless, this is a ticklish business, which will require much management, and is expensive, Sir, in the outset.' They then lowered their voices; and soon after that, I distinguished your name, General, pronounced in a threatening tone, upon which I set to, to listen with all my ears. All that was said, exactly, I cannot tell; but this I heard distinctly uttered by him who spoke first: 'Well, well, I care not—the girl I will have; and somehow or other the old man must be brought to terms, or got rid of altogether.'"

"A most extraordinary story," interrupted the General; "it may lead to a discovery of—but go on, go on, Lovel!"

"At length both the men ceased talking; and then I heard the chinking of money, and a counting, like, of it down upon a table. After this, they made some observation about the storm having blown over, and went out at the front-door, having settled their score with the bar-maid, a young girl about twelve years old; the only person who chanced to be in the way. As soon as I marked which way they went, I inquired of her if she knew who they were; but she said she was a stranger, and had only come within a few days to her place, and had never set eyes on 'em afore. So, seeing I could get nothing out of her I took my stick in my hand, and followed 'em as fast as possible, determined to discover their name and abode, and let your honour know you had an enemy, that you might be upon the look-out. I soon come'd up with 'em, but they were both so muffled up like, besides that the night was dark, and what light there was only flashed out by fits and starts when the moon popped from behind a cloud, that I could not tell what sort of chaps they were, excepting that one was short, t'other tall; and then all I could do was to keep 'em in sight till they came to the cross-roads, where one went on, and the other turned off to the right; so I could only watch one of them. I chose him who I thought looked to be the master; and I contrived, by keeping alongside, and under the shade of the hedges, to go a good distance unperceived.

"At last, however, he spied that there was some one dogging him, and he seemed by his way of walking, every now and then fast and slow by turns, to be hesitating what to do; when he suddenly stopped short, and facing sharp round upon me, drew a pistol and *threatened* me with instant death if I did not turn back the way I *came.* At the same moment the moon shone out, and I could see

my man plain enough, so as to know him again any where, if he had not had on a mask——"

"A mask!" ejaculated General Montgomery, in much agitation, "how wonderful!"

"What! does your honour know any thing of him, then?"

"Proceed, Corrie, proceed; keep me not in suspense."

"Well, General, I had seen shots enow, not to be frightened at the sight of fire-arms; and I did not think the fellow would dare to murder me merely because I walked the same way he did, and so I told him. With that he gave me abusive language, and called me a gipsy scoundrel, and many hard words that I would not take from him nor no man; so I giv'd him a Rowland for his Oliver, and answered him back. Corrie Lovel was not behind-hand at that game—and he to it again, till my blood was up, and I told him I had overheard his wicked intentions respecting you, General, and pretended to know more nor I did know.—'Is it so, my hearty! then take that, to make you listen better another time,' and so saying, he levelled his pistol and fired. But I leapt aside, and the ball whizz'd past me untouched; with that, I sprung upon him, and we had a severe tussle, for he was a strong man, and I was nearly overcome. A moment I gasped for breath—I saw him fumbling for something at his girdle—I guessed what it was; and in an instant, while my hand was disengaged, I raised my trusty bludgeon, and felled him with a blow, from which he dropped never to rise again. I waited not, as you may believe, to know more, but fled as fast as my legs could carry me; and thinking no danger could betide you, honoured General, from that quarter, I consulted my own safety alone; but, somehow, I have been a miserable man ever since; always expecting to be taken up, and hoping little from a true relation of the facts, as there were no witnesses to the transaction, and my word would go for nothing; for who would believe Corrie Lovel the gipsy?

"After a time, I came skulking back, in hopes of seeing you, honoured General. I thought as how I should be easier in mind if I could converse with you, and tell you my story; but you had left the Hall, and I could not learn where you were gone; and then, indeed, I was a very wretched man, for I had not a friend to look to in the world, and I felt as if every man's hand was against me. The instant I heard of your return, I came here with speed, and have now eased my mind of a heavy load."

"Your story, for many reasons, Corrie, is one which fills me with

astonishment. I cannot disbelieve your words,—why should I?—and they at once explain and confirm a circumstance which happened to myself, that renders it, indeed, one of the utmost interest and consequence to me. As you relate the story, you stand exonerated from the foul crime of which you accuse yourself; since, certainly, if your words are true, you only defended your own life."

"Honoured General, have you ever found me out in a lie?"

"I never have, Corrie; neither do I believe I have cause to distrust you on the present occasion. Nevertheless, it might, as you say, go hard with you, were you tried by the law for this offence; but the whole business is involved in mystery, and appears to me to be connected with another event of more recent date. I should advise you, therefore, to keep out of sight at present. Time brings foul and fair to light, and I do not despair yet of rendering you another service, and making it clearly appear, from corroborative evidence, that your story is strictly true."

"You do not then, honoured General, charge me with murder?" said Corrie Lovel, his eyes sparkling with satisfaction.

"Certainly not, Corrie; I repeat, you only defended your own life."

"Well, General, you saved that life once before, and now you have, as a body may say, saved it a second time; Heaven bless you and prosper you, and all belonging to you! and so Corrie humbly takes his leave."

It was some time before General Montgomery could recover from the surprise into which this extraordinary account had thrown him. Here, then, was a providential discovery which developed the machination that had been formed against him; and though he did not positively know *by whom*, his suspicions glanced at a quarter to which he could easily direct his inquiries. As his honour depended on the investigation of the affair, he determined on leaving no means unresorted to, that might detect the guilty. In doing this, however, he owed it to Corrie Lovel's safety to be cautious of exposing him to unjust suspicion.

After mature deliberation, General Montgomery decided, in consideration of his loved niece's happiness, to impart this astonishing narrative to Lord Mowbray and Colonel Pennington, under a promise of the strictest confidence. He felt he owed it to Lady Emily, to satisfy Lord Mowbray's mind concerning the rumour which had *gone abroad* respecting him. Accordingly he imparted to them the *avowal that* Corrie had made, and he added, addressing Lord

Mowbray, "The power thus unexpectedly afforded me of clearing away the dark surmise that attached to me, is doubly precious, as it enables me to give you the hand of Emily, and no longer to postpone your union."

The joy of all parties was thus rendered complete; and the pious and reflecting mind of Lady Emily failed not to see the mighty hand who can conduct us through the most intricate paths, and bring light out of darkness.

Lord Mowbray wrote to his friend Mr. Altamont, to request him to officiate at his approaching wedding. Joyfully he obeyed the summons. To him, likewise, the late wonderful events were communicated, and they obtained all his warmest sympathies.

"But you must not," said he, "in the fulness of your happiness forget, that to allow such delinquents as those who acted in this business to pass undiscovered, would be positively wrong: too much goodness becomes weakness."

"Neither do I intend it," said the General. "As soon as Emily's nuptials have taken place, I will vigorously pursue my inquiries."

"So be it, then," he replied; "and let us fix an early day, that these inquiries may not be delayed. I have always a good reason, you know, my Lord, for helping a friend to the fulfilment of his wishes, when I can do so with a perfect trust, that I am rendering him a lasting happiness."

Nothing now remained to cast a shade upon Lady Emily's prospects but the recollection of her sister, whose great indifference to and neglect of her uncle, for a length of time, had been severely felt by him and by herself. The little she had elicited from Lord Mowbray respecting her was very unsatisfactory at best; and as she saw the subject was one of great disquietude and pain to the General, she resolved to drop it altogether for the present; trusting that, after the marriage, a reconciliation and restoration to his favour might be brought about with Lady Frances through her means.

In the parish church, Lady Emily and Lord Mowbray received the nuptial benediction, attended by the prayers and blessings of the poor, as well as by the great, of the neighbourhood. Their marriage was not solemnized with any luxurious display, but was hallowed by a serious and devout sense of the great responsibility and awful nature of the vows they took upon themselves, and rendered doubly impressive by its being performed within the sacred walls of a place of worship.

CHAPTER XXV.

Domestic happiness! thou only bliss
Of Paradise that has survived the fall!
Thou art not known where Pleasure is adored,
That reeling goddess with the zoneless waist
And wandering eyes, still leaning on the arm
Of Novelty, her fickle, frail support;
For thou art meek and constant, hating change,
And finding in the calm of truth-ty'd love,
Joys that her stormy raptures never yield. COWPER.

It may be remembered, that Lady Bellamont had plunged into a vortex from which it is scarcely possible to retreat, when once entered upon. The current of dissipation sets in too strongly to be resisted by those who give themselves up to its ensnaring power, till it has hurled them into its destructive abyss. There were moments when a letter from Lady Emily, a message from General Montgomery, or some natural feeling of her childish years, recalled a half wish to change, or at least check her course; but then, false shame—a distaste for tranquil enjoyments—a deadness to intellectual pleasures, increased by an indulgence in every worldly gratification, the pride of life, and the flush of beauty, blinded their victim; and as she unloosed the sails of pleasure, she gave these compunctious visitings to the winds, and rapidly pursued the course of destruction.

From the time of the last notices on Lord and Lady Bellamont's married career, his attentions to Lady Dashwood became more glaring. He, poor deluded husband, finding himself neglected, almost contemned, by her who ought to have been devoted to him, sought refuge from mortified pride and wounded affection in the contrast of that pretended and false devotion which he met with from another, till he fancied himself seriously attached to her.—Then it was, that occasionally Lady Bellamont on her part felt the mortification of being a forsaken wife; and though she cared not for her husband's love, she was sufficiently selfish to dislike its being bestowed upon another. At such moments, she would seek occasion to quarrel; and those occasions are never wanting when there is the will. He would then retaliate upon her, and *mutual reproach* and recrimination ensued. By degrees this too ; *and an open* defiance of all appearance even of caring for

each other, was the next step in their downward career. Lady Bellamont constantly invited Lady Dashwood to her house; and the latter as constantly summoned Mr. Carlton, Mr. Lepel, and all the et cetera, whom she knew constituted Lady Bellamont's list of male flirts. Whenever there was any scene of quarrelling, or parting, or jealousy, between Lord Bellamont and Lady Dashwood, Lady Bellamont would contrive to leave them alone together, and then boast to the men in her train that she never interfered upon such occasions, but always allowed the parties to have their romantic quarrels and reconciliations out quietly.

Notwithstanding this excess of fashionable ton, or, as some might call it, depravity, Lady Bellamont's wounded vanity did not pass unobserved by Mr. Carlton, who took the opportunity to enlarge upon her wrongs, and to hold up her husband as a man in every way quite unworthy of her; at the same time affecting to sigh, and to say Lord Bellamont knew not the treasure he possessed—a woman at whose feet he ought always to be—who had done him but too much honour in marrying him—who might have commanded any match in the kingdom, had she only been seen properly before she was inveigled into a marriage with *such* a man as *Bellamont!* By these insidious speeches, and such as these, he turned the tide of her vanity entirely upon himself; then he gradually dropped somewhat of the levity with which he had hitherto treated the subject of attachments; and at length, with consummate skill, led her to believe that he had entertained a violent passion for her before her marriage (the hackneyed but too successful contrivance of the licentious and profligate), though, in fact, he had never thought of her but as of a woman who might be worth flirting with, after another man had been fool enough to marry her. Then he went on to say, that despairing of gaining her affections, and conceiving her to be totally indifferent to him, he had endeavoured to lose the painful sense of his disappointment, by affecting to laugh at all love, and to plunge into gaiety of every kind.

When a married woman suffers a man to make her such an avowal, without checking him on its outset, she is on the very brink of a precipice, from which nothing less than a miracle can save her. Had she one recollection left of the *duty* and dignity of a wife, to say nothing of the peculiar *delicacy* of a married woman, which ought to render her more alive to every possible contamination than a single one, since the honour of two beings is in *her* keeping—she would turn with scorn from such degrading confidence, and scoff at

the impudent falsehood which, nine times out of ten, is as much a falsehood as it is an insult.

But this was not Lady Bellamont's case. Greedy of admiration, which she would obtain at any cost—bent on pleasure—impatient of control—desiring something, she scarcely knew what, of a greater degree of liberty—*ton*—*éclat*, than any one ever boasted of before; she had set out on this track, by imagining (because she saw the same path pursued by a few who arrogated to themselves, poor silly insignificants! the title of "The World," *par excellence!*) that to despise every thing, and every body who were not of this number —to hold in ridicule or contempt all moral and religious duties—to think that all happiness depended on living in one succession of empty pleasures, was to become the perfection of human nature, and to obtain the summit of felicity.

In order to be admitted one of this select crew, many watchings and labours were requisite; but labours become light when they are labours of love, so that Lady Bellamont had brought herself into perfect training; and, among other accomplishments, she had learned to receive the confidences, false and true, of all the impertinent coxcombs who chose to try how far they might pollute her mind by relating all they knew and did not know of every other woman of any note in "The World," *their world*, thereby gradually insinuating that there was in fact no such thing as purity existing; it was all a matter of terms, not of reality; an agreement *de convention;* a thing to take for granted—but every body as they got out of leading-strings knew otherwise. This fatal poison of corruption pours its insidious bane into the heart; and when the heart is once polluted, what is there in the individual that remains unsullied, since from thence flow "the issues of life?"

Lady Bellamont had not intended to lay herself open to the lost condition she gradually sunk into: the criminal who begins his vicious career by petty thefts, does not intend to commit murder, still less does he mean to be hanged; but the path of vice, once entered upon, is fearfully rapid! whether it be that of fashionable or low crime, its end is destruction.

Mr. Carlton found his victim more difficult of attainment than he had foreseen; because she had less feeling and more calculation than he gave her credit for; but at length he prevailed so far as to make her imagine herself in love with him. This great point once *effected, how* did he show forth his triumph? He paraded her *every where, as his* property; attended her at all public places,

passed whole mornings in her drawing-room; was always at the side of her barouche in the Park. If the point of Lady Bellamont's feather was seen, it was enough for all Mr. Carlton's friends to say, "Oh! yes, Carlton is here. I saw Lady Bellamont." When the lists were made out for invitations, it was said, "No, no, do not ask him, for I cannot have Lady Bellamont; my table is full, or my house will not admit of greater numbers;" she was, in short, the *affiché* of Mr. Carlton; and, melancholy to say, she knew she was, and had come to that pass that she liked it, and conceived it to be a sort of distinction to have an *adorateur déclaré*.

This might have been sufficiently tonish for Lady Bellamont, but it was by no means so for Mr. Carlton. At length, he watched his opportunity; and having detained her, till an undue hour, at a fête champetre and ball given at a celebrated villa, under pretence of its being impossible to find her carriage in the crowd, and various other excuses, he then, with well-acted despair, declared that her reputation was infallibly gone; that being seen walking about with him, in the absence of all her friends, and at such an hour, left her nothing for it but to place herself at once and for ever under his protection.

For this, however, she was not prepared, and she still persisted in going home. His carriage, which had followed at due distance, *happened* to come up at this moment on his making a signal to his servants, and she had no other resource left but that of getting into it, and being escorted by him to her own house. Arrived there, Mr. Carlton alighted and handed her in to the door, when, to her astonishment, Lord Bellamont himself received her. He was evidently flushed with wine; but not sufficiently inebriated to be ignorant of the manner and the hour of her appearance.

Few women are so abandoned as not to shrink before the steady gaze of an injured husband. Lady Bellamont began apologising and accounting for her being so late, in a flurried but apparently careless way; when Mr. Carlton whispered to her, "Don't you see he is dead drunk; how can you condescend to talk to him thus, when he is in such a state?"

"Madam," said Lord Bellamont, taking her hand somewhat roughly and pulling her towards him, "go up to your apartment and hide your disgrace. As to you, Sir, you are a villain and a coward. To-morrow I will answer any thing you may have to say to this observation:" and, pointing to the street, he closed the door violently in Carlton's face.

A dreadful scene ensued between the husband and wife. It is not to be wondered at that Lord Bellamont, under such provocation, lost something of his 'vantage ground by the intemperate language in which he at first reproached his guilty wife. But Lady Bellamont, on the contrary, taking advantage of a virtue, to which, in fact, she had no right (for she forgot that there is an adultery of the heart), defied him to any proof of her actual guilt; while he well knew, that his conduct with Lady Dashwood must for ever preclude the possibility of his daring to breathe a word against herself.

"Whatever may be my faults," replied Lord Bellamont, who was by this time perfectly sober, "they are no excuse for your's; and if, in some few instances, the husband's crimes may be pleaded in extenuation of the wife's, you must be conscious, Frances, that, in our own, they never can. Had I a thought but for you and of you? Did I not wish to live for you alone? Did I not intreat you to pass the greatest part of your time in the quiet of a domestic circle, in scenes of tranquil retirement, where social duties and married happiness are best preserved, free from the taint of bad example and dangerous temptation? But you scorned—nay, positively refused, all these my offers. What can be argued of a woman who will not consent to pass any time alone with her husband?"

"Argued? why they will argue that she had a cross, ill-tempered man to deal with—an unreasonable, jealous man, who could not suffer her ever to speak to a soul but himself. The wife will be pitied, the husband laughed at; that is all."

"Frances, the time is past when these false, flippant, and infamous ways of reasoning can affect me. I know my own faults now, thank God; and, in knowing and acknowledging them, I am restored to what I ought to be, not only your husband, but master. Listen to me, Lady Bellamont—I command you to listen to me. I have been the dupe of my own follies, the fond and foolish puppet of your will; and I have been on the verge of making a total wreck of my own dignity and self-esteem, together with that of our mutual happiness. But I have awakened to a sense of what I owe myself and you; and I will, if it be not too late, snatch you from that perdition into which my weakness and your own vanity or worse, had nearly plunged you."

"Mercy on me, what a tirade!"

"Nay, hear me out, Madam! I am willing to overlook the past; *I am willing to confess* my own errors, and am determined to re-

dress them; but in return I will take upon me those rights which, as a husband, are mine, and will control your conduct in such wise as seems good to me; not with brutal harshness (you cannot, Frances, in your heart accuse me of any thing but too fond a love), but with that wholesome restraint with which it is the duty of every man to guide his wife, and which every one who resigns will repent the longest day he breathes. I offer you now the return of a heart which you only estranged from you by your own acts. I offer you honourable, lasting, and pure attachment, with all the durable happiness which flows from such an unpolluted source; but in return I will be repaid by obedience and duty; and oh! how ardently I wish to add, by love!"

Lady Bellamont was touched; but too proud, too unsubdued in spirit to like to answer; she kept taking off her ornaments and twisting them in her fingers. Lord Bellamont looked at her despairingly—"I trust I am not too late," he said; and then added, "I will leave you, Frances, to reflect on what I have said. To-morrow, I shall expect your answer, your final answer:" and he left her to take council with her own heart;—but, alas! that heart was polluted—hardened—lost!

"My answer," said Lady Bellamont to herself as he left the apartment, "is determined upon already. I will not live another hour under this roof. What! submit to be watched, tyrannized, commanded by a cross, ill-tempered husband, and one, too, who forsook me? No: I have a spirit above that; but then, what is the alternative?"—and she calculated, or rather miscalculated, in the bitterness of her evil and deceived mind, that *the world—her world* would extenuate all she did, in consideration of Lord Bellamont's violence and ill-temper; and then she thought, "I shall only be out of society for a little while; Mr. Carlton is heir presumptive to a title—has a large estate—there will be a divorce, and all that; and then, after a nine days' wonder, he will bring me back to take my place in *the world* again. Do not such things happen every day? it depends upon the power of the man—his rank, his fashion; all these are Mr. Carlton's, or will be."

Such was the conclusion of Lady Bellamont's false and vicious reasoning; and the next day she voluntarily threw herself into Mr. Carlton's arms.

Lord Bellamont challenged Mr. Carlton. They met; and the latter, having received his fire, declared he owed him no ill-will, and could not think of returning it, so he fired in the air: and the gay world

called him a brave and honourable man. What could *he* do if the Lady would run away with him? The Morning Post, and other public prints, teemed with the *fracas* for some days, and then it was as much forgotten as though it had never happened. Forgotten!—where? and by whom? It is an awful question—too awful to be answered in these pages.

Not many weeks after Lady Bellamont left her husband, she began to repent of the step she had taken, and became exceedingly weary of her forced retirement. Thrown on her own resources for amusement, she soon found that passion without mutual esteem will not last; then came that disgust and *ennui* which is its invariable consequence; no holy bond of union linked her and her paramour in the same chain of interests and of honourable pursuit—guilt threw off the mask, and Mr. Carlton already ceased to play the part of a lover. Then what was left to her? she experienced what she once professed to know, that a cottage and love were mawkish things. They *are* so for the hardened and the guilty, the luxurious, the extravagant, and the idle. She tried to brave the sting of conscience, and go forth, a branded thing, to drive in the public places. Here she had the mortification to see even Lady Dashwood pass her carriage, and pretend not to know her. For the first time in her life Lady Bellamont felt humbled; but, alas! it was not yet the humility of a contrite spirit; it was the mortification of disappointed vanity.

In a short time longer, the usual process of similar crimes produced similar results, namely, mutual reproaches and mutual disgust; but at length Lady Bellamont's extravagance was so great that Mr. Carlton told her she might provide herself with another protector, for he could not afford to keep her any longer.

Writhing under mortification and lacerated selflove, Lady Bellamont was still unsubdued, still impenitent. The fatal gift of beauty, fatal when misused, was still left her for her bane: love of indulgence and luxury, and show, still prevailed. To be poor and penitent she laughed at, and scorned the idea of appealing to her relations to assist her in this her hour of need and save her from farther degradation. But no: to shine and to dazzle was still her ruling passion; and she plunged deeper into the fatal abyss of ruin and disgrace, till abandoned, forsaken, and left on a bed of sickness, the hour of remorse and reflection came at last too late for this world's mercy or forgiveness; but never too late, it may be hoped, for that to which she was shortly to be summoned.

One time after Lady Emily's marriage, General Montgomery

became acquainted with the miserable conduct and fate of his wretched niece Lady Bellamont. He sent her every consolation that her unhappy situation could admit of; and through her uncle's tender goodness, and the kindness of Mrs. Altamont, her death was more exemplary than her life had been.

Come as it might, it was a heavy blow on General Montgomery, and long and deeply did Lady Mowbray also feel this sorrow.—"I should have been too happy," she said, as she wept in her husband's arms, "had not this calamity reminded me that perfect bliss is not the portion of this life."

The General, in compliance with Lady Bellamont's last wish, gave orders that her funeral should take place in the parish church of his domains, and her body was accordingly conveyed thither for interment.

There was one carriage that met the burial-procession as it was turning into the church-yard, and impeded the progress of the hearse. It was Mr. Carlton's. His attention was attracted by the numerous train of attendants, which marked the funeral to be that of some distinguished person. He inquired whose it was, and learned it was that of the unhappy Lady Bellamont. Struck with the awful coincidence of this meeting, and in a moment of conviction as it were of his own guilt, the very circumstance of his having crossed the progress of her body as it was borne to the grave, seemed to have appalled him; and shrinking from the sight, he said to his servants in an agitated voice, "Drive back,—back to the Manor-house!"

There he lingered; but never roused himself from the blow which had fallen upon him. Some interior convulsion had taken place, which he himself felt to be the harbinger of approaching death, and his thoughts were directed to that tribunal before which he was conscious he should soon appear. Fearful and appalling must have been the reflections and anticipations of a man whose life had been such as Mr. Carlton's. In one instance he did all which was left in his power, to make some poor amends for the error of his ways: he disburthened his conscience of the guilty conduct he had pursued towards General Montgomery; and some days before the attack of palsy, which carried him to his grave, had deprived him of the power of utterance and of his senses, he addressed the following letter to General Montgomery, at once explanatory of many mysterious circumstances which have occurred in the course of this

narrative, and convicting himself of the basest and most refined villany.

Mr. Carlton's Letter to General Montgomery.

"But for the atonement I am anxious to offer by the honesty of this confession, I had spared myself the pain and humiliation which it will cause me: and but for a motive, the nature of which cannot be misunderstood (my ardent and heartfelt desire to repair the evil I have done), had saved my memory by concealment, from the additional guilt of having forfeited your friendship, and basely repaid every kindness showered upon me, by a series of the most unprovoked, premeditated, and calm acts of ingratitude.

"A fearful mystery has for months past hung publicly over your character and conduct; doubt and suspicions of your birth-right and claim to the property which you had hitherto used and enjoyed as your own, have wrung your heart in secret; and, without the power of either repelling the falsehood of an insinuation made to you in private, and under a sacred obligation to silence, or of conscientiously restoring what you innocently had kept from another, your very possessions have become bitterness to you, and your family distinctions (in your own breast) a stigma and reproach. In solitude and retirement you have shunned the gaze of the world, and the society of those whom you once held dear as friends. You have borne the reproach of such as believed you guilty; you have seen the ardour of former friendships almost extinguished, while your silence, on subjects which you *dared* not reveal, have confirmed their reluctant suspicions of your integrity. By a sense of honour, refined and noble beyond the general feelings of mankind, you had almost forfeited the happiness of a being, whose existence and affections were devoted to your declining years, and who, the captive of violence and fraud, had well nigh been snatched from your bosom, and, leaving you friendless, alone, and miserable, had herself been reduced to wretchedness and disgrace.

"Through whom has this accumulated suffering been visited upon you? By whose agency, and for *what* cause has this misfortune been suffered to impend over and destroy your peace? It has been through *me*—through my machination—for my purposes—through my villany—for my most wicked ends! Behold, in this voluntary confession of my crime and of my penitence, the only retribution which (lost and infamous in my own eyes, as I must be in yours, and approaching fast to that hour when I must render an account of all to my Maker) I can now render to *you:* and may, oh! may this step, in proportion as it disburthens my own conscience of its load of guilt, restore tranquillity to a spirit which I have so wantonly and so wickedly wounded!

"But my strength forbids an indulgence of my own feelings at this crisis. I must be brief, or the points which render my writing imperative will go unexplained. I need not recall to your remembrance (for full well have I understood the fatal influence it exercised over you) the conversation held with *the stranger in the mask.* His proposals, and his threats to induce compliance with his demands, might well have authorised any measures, spite of the solemn engagement exacted from you of secrecy, which could have been taken to repel their offer; and *could you have read,* could you have penetrated the veil which hid their atrocity,

you *had* done so, your indignation had been hurled publicly on the offender, and he had received at the moment his just reward; but a sense of honour forbade your disclosure of what had passed; the nature of the subject forbade it also; and it was this circumstance which afforded to your traducer his best security, and placed in his hands the means of more securely blasting your reputation, and indulging more freely the spirit of revenge which actuated him. It is useless to persevere in the disguise which I assumed on that night. It was myself who came, concealed by the dress I wore, on that mysterious errand, which had for its object the gratification of restless ambition, and the resentment of a mortified vanity, whilst I knew I was inflicting on an innocent and friendly heart the deadliest wounds.

"Yes, it was I! I stand before *you*, General Montgomery, who *have* been, and had nearly been yet more my victim, the self-accused, self-condemned author of *all* the misery you have undergone. There is another who has been my agent —prompter—counsellor, in this base transaction; him I will denounce hereafter. But I write now of myself. A desire to unite the Montgomery property to my own, was the first impulse I received in the line of conduct I unhappily pursued towards yourself; a marriage with one or other of your nieces, was the most evident step to ensure the accomplishment of my wishes; and had success attended this measure, I had been less guilty, perhaps, than I now am: when the motive, however, is vicious, the result can seldom be propitious, and such was my case. I was rejected, and from concurrent circumstances (which my conscience, in respect to Rose Delvin, told me was too a just a punishment), I became an outcast from your society, and the finger of scorn, I felt, was pointed at me, in the midst of my own possessions. Revenge then took possession of my heart, and I found in the crafty villain Aldget, a too ready promoter of all my plans. It was he who, from an acquaintance with the affairs of your family, first suggested the possibility of your birth being destitute of the usual proofs, and of the consequent forfeiture of your right to the Montgomery estates; and though the evidence offered me on the subject was any thing but such as would establish the assumption, yet, misled by his arguments, and blinded by my own evil passions, I rashly conceived it only necessary to alarm you on the point, to ensure my ultimate success in it.

"We met; I found you undismayed by the power I attempted to assume; I saw you quivering under, and keenly alive to the disgrace inflicted on your birth, and on the reputation of your parents; I beheld you struggling with the sense of honour, which your word, given to me of secrecy, imposed on your just and natural feelings of indignation, and—for the instant I was appalled. Had I then possessed courage to avow my disgrace, I had found, I am certain, even *in you*, whom I was injuring, the most indulgent and noblest forgiveness; and such an act might have led me back to the path of integrity: but I had advanced too far—I was in the power of another, besides yourself, and one whom I dared not trust. I retreated hastily therefore from your presence, and sought the minister of evil who was awaiting the result of my attempt.

"Our appointment had been made at a lone inn by the road-side, not far distant from your house. Thither I hastened as quickly as I could regain my horse, and at the door of the inn, giving him in charge to a stranger who had been brought for that purpose, and who conducted him instantly to a remote part of the country, I met Aldget. We retired to the only private apartment the house afforded, and our conversation towards the close grew warm. We left the inn, and after having pro-

ceeded together a portion of the way, we separated. I soon perceived that I was followed, and apparently watched, by a person who dogged my footsteps. His intentions, from his pertinaciously tracking the windings which I made in my path, were sufficiently apparent, and I became alarmed. I *stopped*—questioned him. My suspicions were confirmed, and a struggle ensued between us, in which I received a blow that felled me to the ground, and left me for a time senseless. When I recovered, my antagonist was gone; and my first impulse was to ascertain if my disguise had fallen off in the encounter. This had not been the case. The mask, which had been firmly secured, was still in its place; and I felt persuaded that whoever had assailed me, could have no suspicion as to my person; the probability was, he had imagined me killed by the blow, and had sought to escape punishment by flight.

"The idea of my security, however, for the moment was banished, by fear of detection from the conversation that had taken place between Aldget and myself, and which I considered must have been overheard, and led to my being followed. I sought an interview with my counsellor; and the story which ran through the village, and which your servants had repeated of the visit of the Mask on the preceding evening, together with his sudden disappearance, suggested to us the horrible expedient of fixing the stain of *murder* on your character. The slander was whispered—was listened to—and at length, on your quitting the Hall, was very generally believed to have some foundation in truth. I was not content with this circumscribed revenge however—but propagated, by every means in my power, in every society, the same falsehood, exaggerated in proportion as distance from the spot, and the circumstances of my hearers, gave opportunity; and often have I received the fiend-like gratification of hearing from others the fact repeated back in my own ear, with additional aggravations attending it.

"Such feelings grew with their indulgence, till success at length blunted the relish springing from a mere undermining of character. I sought deeper vengeance still. I determined, by a deadlier blow, to strike home upon your remaining domestic peace, and resolved on tearing from your bosom the best solace of your blighted and fallen hopes.

"The possession of Lady Emily was my next aim. To this step I was urged by a double impulse. The desire of inflicting pain, to the utmost, on yourself; and the triumph of holding in my power one whose contumelious rejection of my suit had rendered her the object of my bitterest resentment. My design was hurried on to its execution by proceedings, which Aldget ascertained had been adopted, relative to your right over the Montgomery property. We were aware that inquiry must confirm you in the possession of it; that the forged document I had employed, and which you perused on that fatal night, must in consequence be open to detection; and we dreaded that, when armed with this proof, you should employ measures which might involve a discovery of the actors in the whole conspiracy. The knowledge, at least the apprehension, that a living witness was somewhere in existence, to whom our secret counsels had been revealed, rendered us still more alive to fear; and conscience, that restless monitor, suffered us not to repose under this perpetual alarm. Too far advanced in guilt to hope for escape, should discovery ensue, the blow, which by its force was to leave you powerless, and indifferent to the interests of the future, was prepared; or, should it fail of *this effect, its success*, I considered, would secure me against exposure for your

niece's sake, in case my guilt, in the first instance, relative to your property and birthright were traced; and at all events, the gratification of my evil passions demanded the attempt.

"From Lady Bellamont I learnt the place of your retreat; and my object was baffled in its execution there, only by the sudden arrival of Lord Mowbray at Clifton, and his taking up his residence under your roof. Although the conviction of his favoured reception, both from yourself and Lady Emily (whose heart I knew to be deeply interested), added yet more to the gall and bitterness of my spirit, and would have driven me, in the height of vindictive feeling, to an immediate attempt; yet dread of defeat and detection withheld me; till at length your departure for Mowbray Castle appeared to place my victim still farther beyond my reach: I tracked your footsteps, however—I hovered around the walls you inhabited, resolved that no effort should be spared, no opportunity lost, of obtaining my object when accident made me acquainted with people whose calling fitted them more than any others for the execution of my designs. I tampered with, and gained them to the enterprise, which, from this fortuitous circumstance, seemed facilitated beyond my most sanguine hopes; and from the advantage of the secret entrance to the castle, I doubted not of complete success.

"Providence, however, willed it otherwise, when already within the grasp of the hired ruffians, who were employed by me, my victim escaped. I heard from the shore the struggle that snatched her from them; and, as the discomfited band reached the boat in which I sat prepared to receive the fruits of this enterprise, we with difficulty evaded the search that ensued, and gained the vessel which lay for us in the offing, only by encountering the hazards and perils of stealing under cover of the coast.

"Stung to the quick by this reverse, and haunted by the increased danger of my situation, should detection follow, I again sought counsel from my participator in crime. Whether he felt, on any just grounds, assurance of our safety or not, I cannot say; but his language and his manner endued me with hardihood (I cannot call it courage) to brave the worst that might ensue. I sought once more the world and its allurements, in order to drown the uneasy thoughts which ever obtruded themselves upon my moments of solitude. With a forgetfulness of the disgrace I had escaped, in total loss of character, my evil passions revived. Your return to Montgomery Hall; the conviction that followed of your innocence,—above all, the approaching union of Lady Emily with Lord Mowbray, combined to inspire me with yet bitterer hatred and envy of a happiness in which I could not participate, and which I had in vain endeavoured to destroy.

"Driven by the fiend, I again revolved means of revenge for the disappointments that had recoiled on my former projects. Lady Bellamont was the only victim within my reach; I knew your affection for her, though less than for her sister, to be yet deeply grafted in your heart, and I had joy in the thought that an opportunity of inflicting pain was still left me. In other circumstances, a triumph, attended with so little difficulty and *éclat*, would have wanted interest for me. Lady Bellamont had already suffered in the world's estimation, and her fall, therefore, was not likely to be a matter of surprise, or to give distinction (dishonourable distinction!) to the man who consummated her ruin. Yet, the blow I was aware would not be without its effect, where I most desired it should fall; and my part was taken.

"Lady Bellamont, sunk to the lowest point of degradation, stamped as the easy prey, and then the cast-away of her seducer; abandoned and neglected, a by-word to the world, and a reproach to her family, presented a picture of triumph to my revengeful spirit, sufficient to have armed it for an undertaking of ten times the infamy. I essayed, and I succeeded. I revelled in the misery I had consummated till even its perfection pained me; for refinement of cruelty could proceed no farther. The power of torturing my victim failed at last; I had regrets, but not for the enormities committed; I sorrowed, but it was, that human suffering had reached its utmost limit, and that misery, such as I beheld, exceeded my powers of adding to its burthen. To remorse, to poverty, and to disease, I left then the last office of giving to the grave what remained of Lady Bellamont. I had secured to them the prey they already hovered over; my work and my triumph was complete.

"Start not at this avowal of infamy and of murder! the self-degradation which it entails on me, the abhorrence to which I willingly consign my name, must speak for the motive which actuates me; it is justice to you, it is a strong conviction of my guilt towards your unhappy niece, Lady Bellamont, who, though weak and vain perhaps, was not wicked, till rendered so by my villany, that urges me to this open confession of my crime.

"I write to you, I believe, from the bed of death. The Almighty has stricken me through the very being whom I had brought down prematurely and with dishonour to the grave. In *her weakness*, the victim of *my* strength has recoiled upon me, and in the hour of my unhallowed triumph I am laid low—as she is! Oh! General Montgomery, could you know the agony, the torture of spirit which already brings me to a knowledge of the punishment that awaits my crimes, you would not refuse me the consolation of your pardon; you would not deny me the efficacy of your prayers, that I may yet be saved by a sincere and heartfelt repentance. I know that there is mercy, but I have rejected the terms upon which it is offered, till too late. I have despised the warnings, and set at nought the voice of my God, till he will show mercy no longer. I am plunged in despair—yet pray, pray for me—even *me*—and forgive the man, who on his bended knees and with his dying voice implores your pardon.

"Augustus Carlton."

The letter fell from General Montgomery's hand as he ceased reading, and an appalling awe took possession of him; but when the first agitation and horror, occasioned by the disclosures it contained had in some degree subsided, the merciful hand of Providence was deeply and gratefully acknowledged by him; and the incidents which had led to the developement of the whole mystery, were such as could be ascribed to no other cause than that Almighty power which brings good out of evil.

"If we accustomed ourselves," said General Montgomery, "to trace throughout our lives the circumstances which overrule and decide our fortunes, how little should we pride ourselves on our *own* discernment; how much more humbly should we walk in our path;

how clearly should we see, that though it is ours to act diligently for the best, and to *depend* upon a reward, still that the result of our actions, and the issue of our dependance, are ever under the guidance, and in the gift of an Almighty Providence, who wills that good and evil should sometimes come to us through unexpected channels, and through unforeseen instruments."

General Montgomery's mind, relieved, as far as an explanation of the incidents went, relating to himself, and to an innocent individual (Corrie Lovel) from the anxiety and anguish which for a long time had pressed upon it, gradually recovered its serenity and peace.

The wounds, however, inflicted by the conduct and fate of his unhappy niece, were of a nature which, though resignation led him to endure without repining, yet no lapse of years could entirely close, and the memory of them would often steal over and embitter his happier moments.

Among the painful circumstances of a minor kind which he had still to bear, was the conviction (than which nothing is more wounding to a generous mind) of the atrocious villany of a man in whom he had hitherto trusted with such implicit confidence. The knowledge of Mr. Aldget's turpitude rendered it absolutely necessary for General Montgomery to withdraw his affairs from his hands; and the result of this measure was the public disclosure of Mr. Aldget's conduct, and the total ruin of his character.

In the happiness of his loved niece, General Montgomery could, indeed, boast of a sunshine of comfort and of glory, which shed a radiant brightness on the remainder of his days.

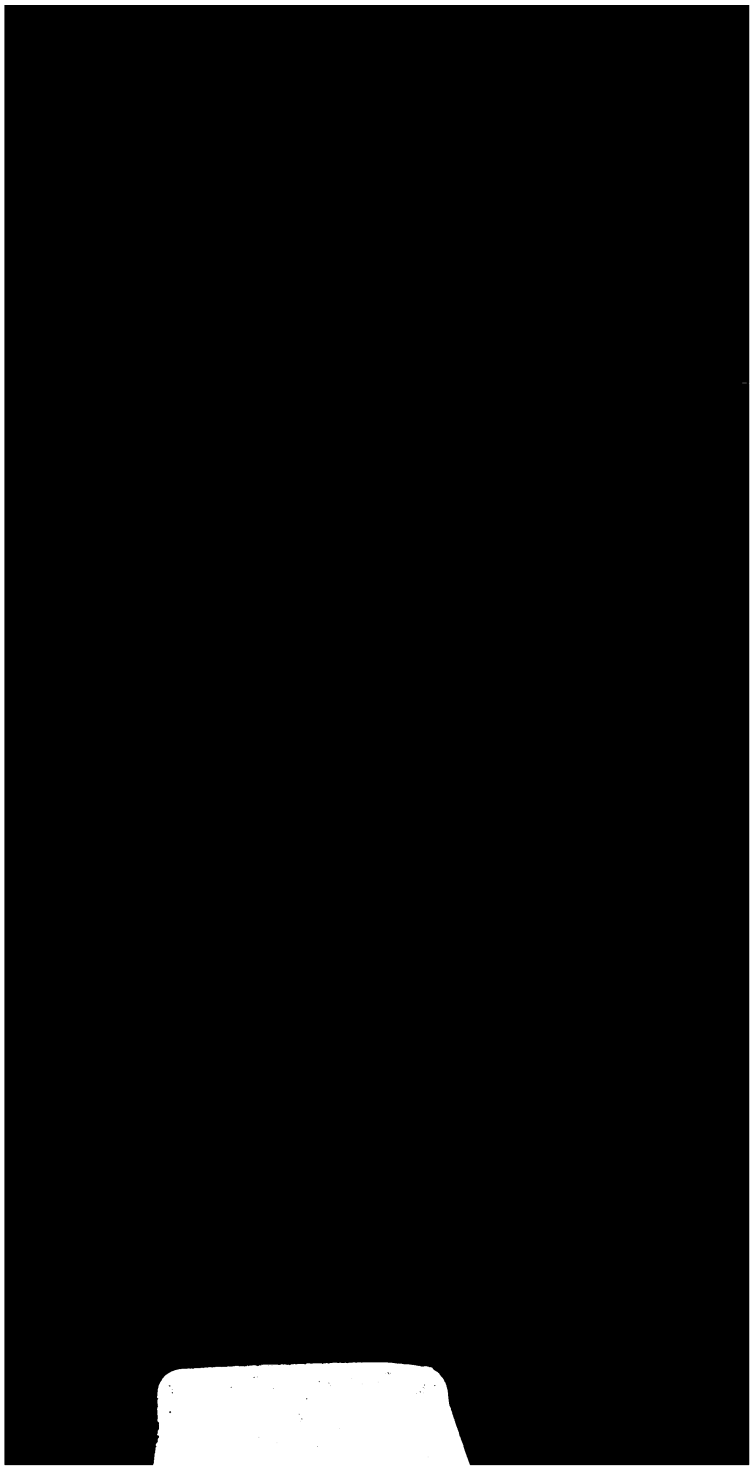
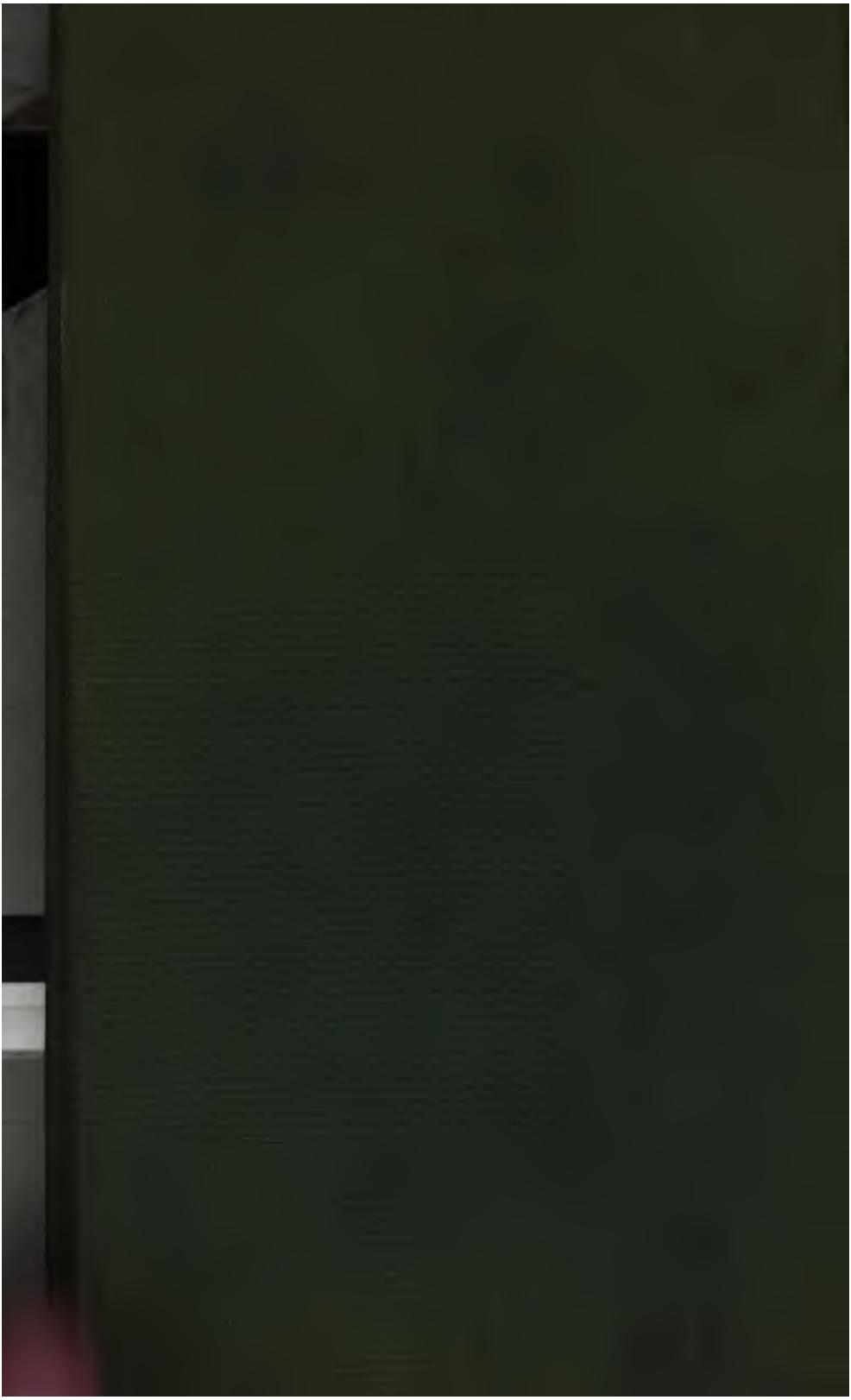
Felicity, unalloyed, is not the portion of humanity; but felicity, unembittered by any self-reproach, and in as great a portion as ever pertained to humanity, was the lot of Lord and Lady Mowbray.

Time, in a happy and honourable union, brings, with added years the added " proofs of recollected love," to swell the present store. In its very continuance, there is fresh motive for it to continue still. A thousand tributary streams of mutual interests and habits flow into the channel of wedded love, and on such affections

> " Time but the impression stronger makes,
> As streams their channels deeper wear."

Not so is it in the illusory bliss of illicit passion; there every added hour of guilty communion destroys the illusion, and blasts the short-lived happiness of such unholy love, and in the ending, for the end

comes quickly, what an arid desert and hideous devastation are left behind!

In the foregoing narrative, the picture of virtue and of vice, under these forms, has been attempted; and it is believed, that in the different fate of the two sisters, may be traced the fate of all who like them shall choose either the pure path which leads to lasting happiness, or follow the downward road to misery and shame, through the PERILOUS MAZES OF FLIRTATION.

THE END.